

ARTICLES ON THEOLOGY

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS ON THE QUEEN OF SCIENCES

Simon Peter Sutherland

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Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from
the King James Version and the New King James Version.

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by Simon Peter Sutherland

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Preface

From the dawn of my first reading, the Bible has been a book which has greatly inspired me in my walk with Christ. The Bible is no ordinary book, as Christ was no ordinary man.

With these things in mind, it is from the depths of my inner being that I make it an aim to contribute in furthering our understanding of the Word of God and to explore the Biblical text with integrity and openness. At the same time, to stand fast to what is written in the Scriptures, rather than what has been written about them.

Thus, I present the following articles which I have written to help further our understanding of certain topics while at the same time to edify the saint, in the hope that the reader will be encouraged and inspired to expound the Scriptures with clarity and openness, while letting the Bible speak for itself.

If I have written anything or things in error, I pray you will reject them, and if in truth, you may embrace them.

*Simon Peter Sutherland
Manchester, England
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Article One

DID PAUL TRULY REBUKE PETER?

“When Peter had come to Antioch, I withheld him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself fearing those of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy”.

Galatians 2: 11. NKJ

Much ink has been spilled over these few words from St Paul’s letter to the 1st century church in Galatia, Asia Minor. The epistle to the Galatians is one of the main sources expositors of scripture refer to in reference to the relationship between the law and the gospel, ‘a topic of which many continue to dispute even to this day’. And such was the case in the apostolic age where disputes often took place, such as the dispute between Paul and Barnabas regarding the unreliability or none-reliability of John called Mark (Acts 15: 36-41). And the dispute amongst the Jews concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles (Acts 15: 1-2) But it is within the passage of Galatians 2: 11 where we read the only surviving detailed personal account of a similar dispute that is not very far from the theological disputes of our day. But this is a little different. Many disputes within the Christian church of today are centralised around secondary issues that are rarely resolved, and those disputes that are not secondary are varying views on the essentials of the faith. But the issue I am about to explore in my argument is very much worth disputing and exploring and for a very good reason. The reason being a defence concerning the reputation and apostolic authority of Simon Peter, one of the main ‘pillars’ of the 1st century apostolic church of the Lord Jesus Christ ¹.

Now then, it is not my intention to explore a secondary issue here, and it is not my intention to ‘split hairs’ by disputing things that are not important. Neither do I wish to appear as a nit-picker, but rather I seek to inspire all Christians to look carefully and clearly with great detail and reasonable criticism of varying opinions by examining them with the strictest interpretation of the holy and inspired text of scripture. It is a sad fact that many Christians simply read the scriptures and take much for granted in assuming their assumptions and theology to be true. People see

¹ Galatians 2: 9.

a word here or a word there and assume it to be referring to what the mind conceives it to be. People can read the scripture with Armenian spectacles or Calvinistic spectacles, Liberal, or Anglican and so on and thus lose sight of the treasure, often sticking like glue to a secondary man made guidebook, creed or impression. But praise God that there are no man made creeds in the Bible, thus leaving room for the individual to discern truth through the accurate indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the renewed mind. For often our opinions are wrong and human nature wages war against us admitting that? Pride is a big part of human existence and is not all bad if we can cage it up before it consumes us. Pride can be a good thing if we use it lawfully and take pride in what we do and do it properly to the glory of God. Now then, when we read the Bible it is beneficial for us to read it with an open and honest approach with great detail. But more than that it is far greater to seek the Holy Spirit on the true interpretation of scripture than it is to hear and interpret what we want to see. It is not good for us to read the Bible and feed our views into the text, but rather let the Bible feed our views into us. It is good and essential to know the Bible well and understand what the text is actually saying not only to us but also to generations that have gone before us. Particularly the 1st century generation of the none-corrupted apostolic age.

EXAMPLES OF ASSUMPTIONS

Now then, there are far too many assumptions made within the pulpit and throughout Christian theology, and I say this with evidence. In my opinion there are far too many Christians that take views on board because they feel right without really testing things critically with the scriptures. For example people often read of John the beloved disciple who wrote the 4th gospel and assume the author to be the very same John who wrote 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and the book of revelation? Such views are now challenged and history reveals the challenge is worthy since both Papias and 4th century church historian Eusebius were both inclined to believe that a certain John named the Elder, who lived in 1st century Ephesus wrote 2 John, 3 John and Revelation ². Today however most ministers and Theologians prefer to lean towards the claim that John the beloved apostle wrote Revelation because such a claim nicely ties up the revealed word, the Lord Jesus revealing all things to His beloved disciple, ‘which is a profound thought’. But what if John didn’t write Revelation? Where does that leave many loved teachers today who may have got it wrong? Why would they make such a claim? Well, I think it is clear that most teachers of the pre-millennial persuasion claim of John was the author of

² Eusebius. History of the Church. Book 3. 39.

Revelation with the agenda of promoting the pre-millennial view of Revelation which places the traditional date of authorship around AD 95 in opposition of a much earlier proposed date of AD 55-65. If the book of revelation was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the pre-millennial view must be the correct interpretation, for no other interpretation would fit but the prophecy of a coming so-called anti-Christ and the end of the world. But if Papias and Eusebius were right and John the Elder wrote Revelation, we have a whole different historical context that says that Christ is ruling now and has destroyed the temple system when the events of AD 70 were accomplished. The proposed earlier date reinforces the text of Revelation 11: 1-2, where John was told to “*Rise and measure the temple of God, the alter, and those who worship there. But leave out the court, which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months*” . No one can argue against the fact that this is a real and clear reference to the temple in Jerusalem, for the context fits no other temple. And further proof lies within the time of the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem from the AD 66 revolt to the completed destruction of August AD 70 being exactly forty-two months ³. Meaning that the temple was still standing at the time of John’s composition otherwise he would have referred to the destruction of it. This type of understanding of dating the gospels through means of what the actual text says can also be applied to John 5: 2 where John says, “*Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches*” . If John had written this gospel in AD 85-95 as most commentators claim, why did he refer to ‘the sheep gate’ as though it were still standing at the time of the gospels composition? Clearly something is wrong with the accepted dates of AD 85- 95 for the writing of Johns gospel. And we know without a scrap of doubt that Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 by the command of Vespasian to his son, Titus. Thus my point for mentioning this is to argue that we should never assume anything. This brings to mind the film ’12 angry men’ where a boy was on trial for murder and 11 of 12 men assumed the boy on trial had killed his father when in actual fact the evidence was totally inconclusive and when Henry Fonda proposed they review the evidence properly, the boy was found ‘not-guilty’. Thus assuming things can be hazardous for many people and the innocent are sometimes led away by those in authority.

The same can be also said of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? Why do we always assume these two people to be men, when in actual fact the man named Cleopas may have been accompanied by his wife

³ Four views on the book of Revelation. Grundy. Pate. Zondervan. Pages 65-68.

‘Mary’ who is mentioned in John 19: 25 ⁴. This may have been why Cleopas spoke and the other disciple remained silent, for the man of God took the lead? Once again we see an unstable assumption of interpretation on our part, and one that is often seen as unimportant. Thus if we stray in areas of interpretation due to lack of detail and care, we may stray on larger issues and teach grave error that will lead many into destruction. Thus I advise once more, ‘never assume anything’.

One may ask, what has this to do with the given text of Galatians 2: 11? Well, my reason for mentioning this is not to cause controversy or discourse but to bring a hope of encouraging you to think and ask questions *‘if you do not already’*. It is good to question what is regularly taught in the pulpit and to review the scriptures to ask who wrote them and why? What is the actual text saying and how can the scriptures relate to us in the 21st century? Well, in doing that let us look openly and critically at the text of Galatians 2: 11-15 and reason through the text and let the actual text convince us of the correct interpretation.

PAULS REBUKE OF A CERTAIN PETER

In Galatians 2 we read of a certain man named Peter, “Petros” ⁵ in Greek who is being rebuked by Paul “Paulos” ⁶ for his certain hypocritical error. As usual we read of Paul speaking out and rebuking bad behaviour he sees within the church. Paul often did this and he consistently had something to say that would wind people up, even to this day. We the readers often assume that Paul is always correct and dare not claim that Paul could be wrong, yet we will happily say that Peter was wrong. In this text we appear to see that in one breath the man named ‘Peter’ had accepted the uncircumcised Gentile Christians while he was with Paul. But when certain men came from James, men who did not agree with Paul’s dismissal of circumcision as a custom of the Law, he swayed over to the circumcision group like a ‘reed blown by the wind’. Peter withdrew from the uncircumcised Greek Christians when strong-headed Jews came from Jerusalem to greet them. Peter was sadly being easily swayed into the pathways and expectations of the minds of other men.

Now it is so easy to read this text and interpret what actually happened because we read of a division between a man named Paul and a man named Peter, both of which were very common names. So why do we assume the Peter of the text to actually be the apostle Peter? Is it just

⁴ Who’s who in the Bible. Richard Coggins. Page 173.

⁵ G4074. Strong's.

⁶ G3972. Strong's.

because the man in the text was named Peter? If so such is a flimsy understanding of the scriptures and one that is unreliable. It is with this matter that most ‘if not all’ Evangelical commentaries I have read follow in the tradition that it was Peter the apostle that Paul rebuked. I myself believed it was the apostle for many years but a fuller examination of the text and history revealed this traditional belief to be untrue. Thus there is only way to gain a greater understanding of this certain Peter and that is to clear the way and remove the encrusted infestations like a tooth comb on a head full of fleas.

THE CONTEXT OF GALATIANS

In the initial context and overall theme of the letter to the Galatian church we find that Paul is arguing a Christian experience of faith rather than a voyage of ceremonial works for salvation. When we review the letter of Galatians we see that Paul is arguing to the Galatians that circumcision is not a requirement for gentile converts, since the only requirement God made was ‘*that by my mouth (Peter) the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe*’ (Acts 15: 7). Please note the words of Peter, ‘*by my mouth the Gentiles should hear*’ (15: 7). Thus rebuking the silly idea that Paul revealed this truth to the apostles and the Gentiles. Hearing and believing were the only two requirements God instigated in order for the Gentiles to receive salvation, ‘hearing and believing’. Thus the only reason that Paul is arguing this point in Galatians is because certain men had come from Jerusalem who rejected the gospel claim that the Gentiles were not under Judaic ceremonies. But having said that, I must point out that at no time does the bible condemn the circumcision of the Jews, but rather does not impose such rituals on the gentiles. We see in Galatians 2: 7, that “*the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to*” Paul, while “*the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter*”. Paul’s letter to the Galatians makes this very clear so that even the most hardened sceptic cannot refute it. The entire context of Galatians is a letter addressed to the Galatian church about an issue that was taking place within that church of which Paul holds this certain Peter responsible for his behaviour in Antioch. It is not a letter that we can ignore the context and apply directly to us in the 21st century like that of the Psalms or Proverbs, we must observe the 1st century context. Thus the text of 1: 6, ‘*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another*’. Please note the words, ‘*which is not another*’ clearly an implying reference to the law of Moses or the old ceremonial covenant ‘which is not another gospel’ but the same gospel taken out of context and applied to those it does not concern. We also see that Paul went to Jerusalem many years after his conversion and

spoke to Peter the apostle and remained with him for fifteen days (Galatians 1: 18). Thus can anyone say that such words as faith by hearing that had been delivered to Peter much earlier were not discussed? After all Christ had already given the commandment for the 12 apostles to, ‘*go into the world and preach the gospel*’ (Mark 16: 15) so why would they not do it? We see in Galatians 1: 22 that Paul was unknown to the churches in Judea ‘which were in Christ’ and verse 23 tells us that they were in Christ by ‘hearing only’. Clearly the gospel of salvation by faith was already being preached and authenticated by Peter the apostle. We know from verse 24 that the church rejoiced that Paul had taught the same as they and ‘they glorified God’. Thus not all those of the Church sought that the Gentiles be circumcised, but rejoiced when the Gentiles had ‘heard and believed’.

Galatians 2: 1, informs us that fourteen years after Paul’s time in Jerusalem Paul went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus which must be the same event as that of the Jerusalem council meeting of Acts 16: 6-21, since Titus was with them and the event order fits the context. More evidence for this is in the dispute that took place between Barnabas and Paul when they returned to Antioch after the Jerusalem council meeting (Acts 15: 36-40). This huge piece of evidence links the letter of Galatians to the event of the Jerusalem council meeting of Acts 15 and destroys most views that argue the event was not a single event but two events. The reason for this proof lies in the fact that Barnabas and Paul were together at the council meeting, and it was after this dispute that Paul and Barnabas parted, so the council meeting must have took place after the first dispute and before the final dispute that separated them. Sadly there is no mention of them reuniting, so the event of Galatians 2: 1-10 and Acts 15: 6-29 must be the same event.

The text of Acts 15: 22 tells us that the apostles (Peter, James and John) sent, “*chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas...and Silas*”. These men were sent at a later date with the letter of apology contained in Acts 15: 23-29. The signature of the letter written by the apostles that was sent to Antioch is one of the proofs that Peter had not previously been responsible or that he did not go. If Peter had previously gone, there would have been no reason to send a letter apologising for the behaviour of those who had previously made the circumcision claims and Peter could not have gone after this for Paul and Barnabas parted company just after this event and Barnabas was at the event. Thus the whole traditional idea of Paul rebuking Peter the apostle cannot be accurate and is thus out of context. And since Peter was previously in Jerusalem before the council meeting and after the meeting

Judas and Silas were sent to bear witness by word of mouth (Acts 15: 27) we know that Peter did not go to either. Thus the whole idea does not stand good theological and critical tests. We see that Peter ‘the apostle to the Jews’ was in Jerusalem with James and John where he gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Galatians 2: 9). At the Jerusalem council meeting Peter spoke against the compelling of the gentiles to be circumcised because God had already purified “*their hearts by faith*” ⁷. Peter also declared that a yoke should not be put upon the neck of the gentiles that “*neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*” ⁸. James then agreed, quoted Amos 9: 11-12 and stated very clearly that “*we should not trouble those from among the gentiles who are turning to God*” ⁹. We also see this pattern also in Acts 11: 2-18, where Peter had already ate with uncircumcised men and defended his right to do so to those from the Jerusalem Church. It is such discourse as this that disproves that Peter swayed over to the thinking of James, when James had already agreed that the Gentiles were not to be under the ceremonial law of Moses anyway (Acts 15: 13-19). It is childish to assume that Peter swayed over to the certain Jewish men’s dogmas when Peter had already stated his claim to them already in Jerusalem with the support of James. Once again we see an assumption and an illogical claim and a slanderous judgement against the character of one of the 12 apostles.

This leaves the question of what Paul is actually saying and informs us why Paul employed two Greek words, ‘Petros’ and ‘Cephas’ when recording this event. Let us look a little further to reinforce this understanding.

PETROS OR CEPHAS?

Now then, my given names are Simon Peter, my parents named me after the apostle. I now have a son named after my middle name of Peter and also the apostle. Now if I were attempting to write a letter communicating a situation that was authenticated by one man named Simon Peter, yet discredited by another man of the same name of Peter, I would employ the name Simon to refer to myself and Peter to refer to the other man. Now when we read the letter to the Galatians in the Greek Textus Receptus and Textus Stephanici 1550 we discover that the letter employs two Greek words to refer to two men named Peter. This is done within the frame of 6 verses. Why is this the case if the two Peter’s were the same men?

⁷ Acts 15: 9.

⁸ Acts 15: 10.

⁹ Acts 15: 19.

In Galatians 2: 11 of the Textus Receptus and Stephanici 1550, Paul refers to a man named Petros¹⁰ while in verse 9 referring to ‘Peter the apostle’ in connection with James, and John, Paul employs the Greek name “Kephas”¹¹. If however you were to read Galatians 2: 9, 11 in Nestles Greek New Testament, based upon the Westcott and Hort¹², you would find Galatians 2: 9, 11 employing the same Greek name ‘Cephas’ concerning the apparent two Peters¹³. This is in direct contrast to the Theodore Beza’s New Testament which employs ‘as the Textus Receptus’ the Latin ‘Cephas’ in Gal 2: 9 and ‘Petrus’ in Gal 2: 11¹⁴. This can also be found in the ancient Geneva Bible, Luther Bible, Tyndall translations and so forth. Thus if a person uses the Textus Receptus, as is common, one needs to ask the question; why would the manuscript make the clear distinction that Paul used two different words to describe the same person? There is little doubt to me that Paul is referring to another Peter who was an accepted within the 1st century Church and unheard of today.

Therefore in my agreement with the ancient English versions and the ancient Greek manuscripts I make my case. I am also arguing this claim with a reinforcement of early Christian history and not merely my own understanding of the ancient Greek texts. From the historical side it must be reviewed that Eusebius claimed Clement, who is arguably mentioned in Philippians 4: 3 and lived in 1st century Rome¹⁵ stated that the Peter who came to Antioch as recorded in Galatians 2: 11 “*was one of the seventy disciples, who happened to have the same name as Peter the Apostle*”¹⁶. Jerome also confirmed this existent belief of the two Peters but he does not confirm its accuracy¹⁷ Jerome and Chrysostom rather strangely claimed that the discourse between Paul and Peter was pre-planned as a demonstration to the Jews¹⁸. Calvin also confirms this wild interpretation as an, ‘absurdity’¹⁹ and certainly deemed the Peter of the text to have been that of Peter the apostle as did Augustine and Luther²⁰.

¹⁰ G4074. Strong's.

¹¹ G2786. Strong's.

¹² The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English. Zondervan.

¹³This can also be found in The Wycliffe New Testament. 1388.

¹⁴ Iesu Christi Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum Latinum. Theodoro Beza. Samueis Bagster.

¹⁵ Clement. Outlines Book 5.

¹⁶ Eusebius. The History of The Church. Book 1. 12.

¹⁷ John Gill. Comm. Galatians 2: 11.

¹⁸ Jerome. Comm. Galatians 1: 11. See also ‘Jerome. His life, writings, and controversies’ by J.N.D. Kelly. Page 148. Duckworth & co. Ltd.

¹⁹ Calvin's Commentaries. Volume XXI. Translated by William Pringle. Galatians 2: 11. Baker books. Page 62.

²⁰ Calvin's commentaries. Volume XXI. Translated by William Pringle. Galatians 2: 11. Baker books. Page 63. Luther. Comm. Galatians 2: 11.

But if Clement and Eusebius were right and this Peter was not the apostle Peter as I believe I have demonstrated, then we have a whole different ball game of understanding regarding this text. But what is the conclusive scriptural evidence for this interpretation? Well let me make some distinctions before concluding that demonstrate that the Peter of Galatians was not Peter the apostle.

1. When Paul refers to Peter the apostle, he uses the Greek, ‘Cephas’ to communicate his reference to Peter the apostle (Galatians 2: 9, 1 Corinthians 1: 12, 15: 5). When Paul refers to the other Peter he employs the Greek word ‘Petros’. He did this so his readers could distinguish between the two Peters (Galatians 2: 11)
2. The argument proposed by Clement is more authenticated by the fact that he lived in the 1st century and knew those who knew the apostles. Eusebius confirms the fact that he was also convinced of this belief. Clement and Eusebius were qualified to make such a claim that the Peter rebuked by Paul was not the apostle, but one of the seventy disciples who witnessed the resurrection of Jesus.
3. The rebuked Peter of the text was a Jew (Galatians 2: 14) as were those who were amongst the seventy and the Jerusalem council meeting (Excluding Titus).
4. Peter the apostle was in Jerusalem with James and John (Galatians 2: 9) while the other Peter previously travelled to Antioch without the order or authority of the apostles (Acts 15: 1-2, 24. Galatians 2: 11).
5. Peter agreed that the ceremonial law was not to be imposed upon the Gentiles and he had no need at all to change his view since he willingly stood up in the presence of all at the Jerusalem council with the support of James (Acts 15: 7-21). It would be foolish to assume that Peter did not fully understand that the Gentiles would be grafted in without the workings of the law, since Christ had already given the great commission to the apostles.
6. The apostles, (including Peter) wrote the letter that was sent to the Gentile churches, including Antioch, as an apology to those who were troubled by those such as the other Peter who had previously attempted to distort the gospel and compel the Gentiles to ‘be circumcised’. (Acts 15: 1, 23-29) Thus if the Peter of Galatians 2: 11 had been the apostle, he would and could not have written the letter apologising for the poor behaviour of those who had previously

attempted to compel the Gentiles to be circumcised “to whom” they “gave no such commandment” (Acts 15: 24).

7. Peter the apostle had already had a vision from God regarding the Gentiles and believed (Acts 10: 9-16) this took place before the event of Acts 15: 1-2 and Galatians 2: 11.
8. The date for the dispute of Galatians took place just before the Jerusalem council meeting, contrary to the views of most interpreters. One reason for this date is understood because Paul and Barnabas were still working together and the events described in Galatians 1: 18-2: 1-9 match with those of Acts 15: 1-29. We are told of the conflict between ‘certain men’ from Judea and Paul and Barnabas at Antioch as described in Acts 15: 1-2, and this is no doubt the same event of Galatians 2: 11-16, hence the term ‘certain men’ as used in Acts 15: 1 and Galatians 2: 12. Paul tells us in Galatians 2: 4 that he, Barnabas and Titus went to Jerusalem for the council meeting because certain false brethren attempted to ‘bring us into bondage’. The context of the bondage relates to ceremonial circumcision and shortly after this event ‘after some days’ Acts 15: 36, Paul and Barnabas parted company (Acts 15: 36-41). Thus since Barnabas is mentioned in Galatians 2: 13 as playing the hypocrite with this certain Peter, the event must have taken place before their parting company.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this matter is based upon an overwhelming flock of scriptural evidence that the Peter who was rebuked by Paul in Galatians 2: 11-16 was not that of the Apostle. And I further argue against the Lutheran view that an apostle could have been led astray by mere men and is therefore a comfort to all Christians that if Peter could have been led astray then so can we²¹. Luther uses the adultery of David and the falling of other biblical figures as reinforcement of his claim, but contrary to this argument it must be pointed out that none of those who previously fell were related to issues of doctrine, but sin. Thus, the text of Galatians clearly demonstrates a message that is not really about circumcision, but concerning truth. It is a powerful warning of the saved man’s inner deception and reed like qualities. Actions such swaying over to varying views and doctrines are completely against what the average Christians should be like. Jesus said, *“What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”* Matthew 11: 7. And the apostle Peters

²¹ Luther. Commentary. Galatians 2: 11-21.

own words declare that men are nothing, “*All flesh is as grass*” 1 Peter 1: 23. Thus, we Christians are to set our standards towards Christ in the pursuit of perfection (Hebrews 6: 1). We read in Acts 23: 2 of where the high priest ordered that Paul be struck on the mouth for words that they regarded a blasphemy. After Paul was struck he replied, “*God will strike you, you whitewash wall!*” Acts 23: 3. This behaviour from Paul demonstrates that Paul was only human and his actions were at this point contrary to the Law, “*You shall not...curse a ruler of your people*” Exodus 22: 28. As Paul condemned the High priest by claiming you, “*judge me according to the Law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the Law?*” Acts 23: 3. Paul was rebuking another man’s lawbreaking for something that he was doing himself. He was acting contrary to the Law and did not know he was shouting at the high priest, that is until he was corrected and then he apologised and made his actions perfect (Acts 23: 4-5). Thus this is the key to the text. Acting contrary to the scriptures and then correcting it when rebuked. When the Lord Jesus was struck in the same manor as Paul was, He replied, “*If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?*” John 18: 23. The actions of Jesus demonstrate that wrong talk and wrong behaviour is worthy or rebuke, but Jesus’ actions and words were perfect, thus demonstrating that we are going on to perfection if we are like Christ, (Hebrew 6: 1-3) Therefore we must emulate Jesus if we are to attain perfection.

No one can deny that each of us can be led astray into error at any moment. We are so full of influence that it’s hard to see any open door. The errors of others whether in books or sermons influence us all whenever we read them, and many people take too much on board without really testing arguments objectively from all angles. If we look at the text of Galatians 2: 11-15, we see a fantastic statement that says, “*even Barnabas was carried away*” 2: 13. Such a statement as this must mean that Barnabas was an excellent man of high esteem. Eusebius said that Barnabas who was a native of Cyprus was one of the seventy disciples, just as the other Peter was ²². And he was led astray just as Barnabas was led astray, demonstrating that those who weren’t apostles could be led astray despite the fact that they were with Jesus during His incarnation. But unlike Barnabas there are many teachers are often persuasive in their way of thinking and often trap many people into the sticky webs they spin across the room.

Thus my conclusion is to demonstrate that many preachers and teachers genuinely believe they are right when they are wrong, and the massively common view that ‘Paul rebuked Peter the apostle’ is a huge error. It is

²² Eusebius. History of the Church. Book 1. 12.

errors such as these that I believe is what the text of Galatians is communicating to all believers. Therefore in conclusion I argue that it could not have been probable for an apostle who was commissioned by Christ to have been led astray by man pleasing doctrines. If it were so the Bible would be unsteady and questionable, and dependant upon man's moods and not God. Very few can doubt that Peter was one if not the chief disciple above the other twelve. And not only do I find it insulting and childlike to say that the Peter of the Galatians dispute was the apostle, but I find it childish and diminishing of Apostolic authority. It is the biggest misrepresentation of a biblical figure since the Roman Church's mistaken labelling of Mary Magdalene as prostitute. But aside from that, it would be helpful towards our salvation to know that when we are placed in situations where members of the Church are not acting in line with the gospel, it is good and essential for us to open our mouths and speak without fear of offending others. This should be done not only for our sakes but for those around us, who not unlike Barnabas are strong in the faith, but may be swayed from time to time into different variations and interpretations of persuasive teachers. We should always be slow to speak and quick to learn, and quick to listen. We should sit and be patient and not be over keen to challenge doctrines and interpretations until we understand where the teacher is coming from in his argument. The man Peter, in the text of Galatians may have been convicted after Paul's rebuke and changed his way of thinking and we will never know. Thus the application of this text can relate to the individual Christian in two ways.

1. To know that Peter was not led astray after the resurrection of Jesus and we can wholly rely on his testimony and doctrine, regardless of human reasoning. This is not a secondary issue.
2. Christians should always be open to our failings and correction of wrong concepts. If we are ever led astray like many have been and many are, we can always come back to the truth. And always remember that even if you do not feel like opening your mouth and speaking against wrong practises for fear of controversy, remember where you could be today had Paul not spoken out?

Article Two

ALCOHOL AND THE BIBLE

Thoughts on the Christian use of alcohol

Many arguments have been presented over the years in opposition to ‘abstinence’. Likewise many arguments have been presented in favour of the so-called ‘teetotalism’. Both arguments lack many things in my opinion. The term ‘abstinence’ could not be argued from the Bible in all cases. The term ‘teetotal’ is in my opinion silly and fails to capture the essence of what abstinence is all about. It is not about ‘tea’. My argument is not about alcohol itself but our usage of it and the Biblical usage of it. It is about sin and the individual Christians avoidance of falling into sin. This is what most promoters of ‘abstinence’ are often hoping to warn people about but fail in the understanding of the usage of the wine written about in the Bible. Wine itself is not evil, ‘unbiblical’ or a sin to consume. Just as money is not evil, but riches and wealth can often corrupt the heart. Sexual intercourse is not a sin, but sexual immorality is a sin. Loving anything in this world more than God in Christ could be a sin since Christ desires to be central and will not be taken for granted or positioned second to something else ²³. He has told us in the word to be ‘sober’ not tipsy ²⁴. To enjoy His water and not the wine of the world. These things are not negotiable by the word of God. Within the context of each passage, it is an absolute commandment not a suggestion. Thus since soberness is the key and wine has a constant usage throughout the Bible, where does that leave the Christian in relation to the usage of wine?

Before I commence with my argument I hope to clarify one thing regarding my points on the individual Christian and alcohol. Firstly I am in no way writing concerning the drinking of Beer, Lager, Whisky or any other drink of this kind. I am primarily reasoning through the issue of consuming wine for Christians and not the consumption of all other alcoholic beverages. The consumption of alcoholic drinks other than wine is not even debatable or worthy of consumption in my opinion in relation to the Christian walk and the Word of God. I do not think they are acceptable at all.

I have in my possession an old copy of Evangelical Theology by A A. Hodge from 1890. I like old books and I like this copy because it was printed only four years after his death. On the back of the hard cover there is a pasted certificate from the Upper Duke St, Total Abstinence

²³ Exodus 20: 3.

²⁴ 2 Cor 5: 13, 1 Thess 5: 6, 8. 1 Tim 3: 2, 11. Tit 2: 2, 4. 1 Peter 1: 13, 4: 7, 5: 8.

Society. On the heading is the proverb “Wine is a mocker”. While underneath the scripture is an image of shaking hands alongside the words “*helping hand*” on either side. It makes an interesting piece of history and cause for reflection. When I look at old Bibles and notebooks containing the actual handwriting and thoughts of individuals no longer with us, I am constantly reminded of my own mortality and the mortality of others. Each person in life attempts to live life the way they feel they should live it, and most people in general offer a “*helping hand*”. Such is a large issue and calling for me to not waste my days. I often think what I would say if I were on my death bed this very moment, ‘have I done all I believe I should have done?’ No doubt in this there would be many who have wasted their lives and health by drinking it away. Thus the book causes me to think upon two things as mandates for life, ‘Don’t waste time’ and ‘Offer a helping hand’. These days there are many helping hands reaching out to help those who are alcoholic’s. Most of these people you will find have not intended on becoming alcoholics but have found themselves addicted to a drug that at one time may have offered them fleeting pleasures. Now they are alcoholics and they always will be and those who introduce themselves and others to alcohol receive a Woe, as the scripture says, “*Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbour*” Habakkuk 2: 15.

Throughout the history of time there have been many that have been addicted to alcohol despite the fact that they never intended to be so. Many of these people who are not unlike those who hand written those faded words contained in my old Bibles will remain unheard of and their stories untold. Careers have been ruined, marriages destroyed, children scared and lives taken whilst someone somewhere has been under the influence of strong drink. A large amount of crime worldwide is committed under the influence. Alcohol is an addictive drug that induces public and secret brawling, abuse, foul language, traffic accidents, murder, adultery, theft etc. When I was a child I admired Charlie Chaplin and his films, I still do. For me the perfection of Chaplin’s film making inspired me as perfectionist, it was such perfection that inspired me to employ perfection to music and later to my faith, even though I have never arrived at the gate and probably never will. Chaplin’s attention to detail became a training ground for me, if you like. Now my love of the smallest detail in scripture causes me to study a great deal, but not before I read scripture for devotional reasons. I also love reading sections of autobiographies of famous people and ordinary people. I look to see if there has been any time when they heard the gospel or thought about a relationship with Christ. When I read sections Chaplin’s book ‘My autobiography’ I learned of his Church attendance and poor quotations of

certain Biblical texts. But more than that I read of how Charles Chaplin's father who was a popular music hall entertainer wrecked his career and marriage because of his addiction to alcohol. His children never had a father because their father was always drunk and died young. This is no exception for many have died of alcoholic abuse. My Mothers mother was an alcoholic, my mothers brother was an alcoholic who later hung himself from his kitchen door. My fathers father was an alcoholic and the same can also be said of popular people such as actors and actresses, musicians, great minds and artists who's brains and bodies have been ruined because they at one time indulged in what many view as a harmless moderate drink or a drug. The world is and has always been dominated by alcohol and drunkenness for many countless years. Many Romans were alcoholics and were most likely drunk on wine when Christ was being crucified ²⁵. But many Christians of today's generation defend the right of drinking alcohol. Often the term, 'drinking in moderation' is used. After all did not Jesus turn the water into wine? Did Paul not instruct Timothy to "Take a little wine for the stomach's sake?" Well, the answer to these arguments is yes, of course Jesus turned the water into wine. And of course Paul instructed Timothy to take a little wine. These things cannot be denied, but they can be manipulated and interpreted incorrectly and assumed as mandates for the individual Christian. It is with such things as these that we must be careful to correctly handle the truth and understand what the text of the Bible is actually communicating. People should look at the scriptures carefully and objectively. In the interpretation of scripture it is vital to understand the times of the Bible and the practices contained therein. If we do not do this, not just within the grounds of hermeneutics but within the fields of inquisitive passion for truth we will be deceived into suicidal practices. For example, we read of many harsh killings in the Old Testament and the prophets and devout men of God performed many of these killings. But are we to follow in these footsteps? Are we to slaughter and hack false prophets into pieces? I doubt it. Why then do people assume that because Jesus performed a miraculous transition of a Jewish ceremonial washing that this is an indication that the drinking of wine is now acceptable as a gentile Christian practice? After all was the wedding at Cana not a Jewish wedding? If people assume that the drinking of wine is acceptable as a Christian practice because Jesus turned the water into divine wine, then we are arguing that God has instigated His people to be like the world and to indulge in what may entice drunkenness. I would drink the wine of Jesus any day, but I rather be damned than drink the wine of the world. After all, those whom use John 2:1-12 as a mandate

²⁵ Matthew 27: 34. John 19: 29. These scripture inform us that wine was present at the crucifixion but my saying that the solders may have been drunk is speculation on my part. I am not saying this as fact.

for consuming unmixed wines are those who are saying that the wedding at Cana housed intoxicated Jews. After all those in attendance must have been intoxicated if they drank all the wine in an unmixed condition, have you any idea how much wine was present? If however they drank the wine mixed with water as the standard practice of Biblical times declares they did, it would explain why no person complained when Christ ordered the water pots to be filled with water. They simply must have assumed that Jesus was going to add wine to the water, and not turn the water into wine.

While the argument of abstinence remains rejected by many Christians of today, I would like to suggest to my readers that really we should receive our comfort and joy from knowing Christ, not external things. Drink is external and not spiritual. Christians shouldn't rely upon receiving joy or relaxation from worldly substitutes that appear to be harmless on the surface or even under the control of the one who consumes them, but from Christ alone. God aims to be the food we eat the drink we drink and the joy we experience. If then Christ is our food and delight, what have we Christians to do with alcohol or the ways of the world? We simply do not need them for we have something more pleasurable than sex, more joyful than falling in love and more tasteful than wine. Therefore as the Lord Jesus said, "*if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink*" (John 7: 37). Thus, let us all partake of the sober intoxication of the wine of Jesus.

Alcohol today

Experts on wine today say that the term, ‘vintage’ is almost absurd since one can pick up a perfectly good wine for a good price that is not vintage. This shows us that the wine today is not the wine of yesterday. The best wines of yesterday had been laid in a cellar and allowed to mature whereas most wines of today do not go through the same process. Much of today’s wines are factory produced and manufactured differently. Most wines are ready to be consumed instantly and do not really improve with age. Wine today is a far cry away from the wine of the ancient Jewish, Greek and Roman world and the Biblical world. Alcohol today is totally different and is produced for totally different reasons. It is extremely dominating and stronger and it is also worth noting that the popular text of Proverbs 20: 1 argues that strong drink can lead the unwise astray. “*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise*”. And it has done so, it controls advertising and occupies large areas of supermarkets and restaurants. Pubs dominate street corners and are breeding grounds for sexual immorality, foul abusive talk, rotten

behaviour and brawling. Depraved night-clubs are soiled with the smell and promotion of all manner of alcoholic beverages that are produced at all different strengths. One such drink conveniently named, *Cana* of Majorca is 75% alcohol and is no doubt some kind of spiritual mockery of the wedding at *Cana*. The 75% production of *Cana* should be no surprise to know that this is a far cry away from the alcohol produced in Bible times and the miraculous wine produced by Jesus at Cana. In fact there can be no comparison to drinking Biblical wine estimated at 2% - 6% with modern day wines such as the Italian Pinot around 12 % and Nobleman full cream at 15%. Most table wines today contain about 9-13% alcohol whereas fortified wines such as Port and Sherry contain 16-23% alcohol. Sparkling wines are doubly fermented and come in a variety of colours such as red made from whole grapes, white made without grape skins. The Bible condemns the use of red wine, "*Do not look on the wine when it is red*" Proverbs 23: 31 and why? Well, because it is double fermented.

Many consider the use of wine as acceptable within the pages of the Bible but it is not. Wine today is industrious whereas the wine of Biblical times was almost a necessity there can be no comparison to the wines of the ancients and the wines of today. Today's alcohol promotes a visual presentation of the world and is often associated with sex, double meanings and foul language. The Australian Castlemaine XXXX is a prime example of this. Meaning in other more polite words that Australians do not give a four-letter word for anything else. Such things are clearly so worldly that there is no Christ in it whatsoever. It is more Pagan than Pagan, more than sensual, more than worldly, it is from the pit and despite its obvious worldliness Christians continue to believe that drinking alcohol and modern day wine in moderation is acceptable before a holy and righteous God. The scriptures say, "*Abstain from every form of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5: 22) and if people doubt that alcohol is a form of evil, then I doubt your understanding and insight in the gospel.

Many argue, "*Jesus turned the water into wine*". It is a tired argument indeed. Jesus did more than that at *Cana*. The water can symbolise the ceremonial Law and the wine can symbolise the spirit filled gospel. "*Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the spirit*" Ephesians 5: 18. Even the weakest of interpreters know that the abolishment of the ceremonial Law of Moses is more related in the meaning of John 2 than the drinking of wine. The scripture is no mandate to drink spirits and if many interpret *the wedding at Cana* as a mandate to drink Budweiser or Stella Artois then much understanding is puny. Arguments regarding the consumption of Wine can be Biblically understood as fair, but arguments that claim it is fine to drink Cider,

Bitter and Beers that range between 4%-5% are not acceptable. Such people who believe in drinking such things do not have the mind of Christ. Such is the error of many, to use one scripture as an argument to promote things that you want to do and to employ one single scripture and ignore many others is as hazardous as employing the divine side of eternal security of John 10: 16 and ignoring the warnings of Ezekiel 3: 20, 18: 26, 2 Peter 1: 10 and Hebrews 6: 4-6. We must take the Word of God as a whole and refuse to see only what we wish to see. How often do we hear the phrase “I don’t have a problem with this or I don’t have a problem with that?” Well, who cares what you do or don’t have a problem with. We are relaying the word of God here, not the words of individual humans.

Wine in the Old Testament

No one can justifiably argue against the fact that there are many passages in the Bible that condemn the consuming of wine. And it must also be stated that the use of wine for certain purposes is at times encouraged in the Bible. But why are there two differences? And why in one text is the use of alcohol permitted and in others denied? Well, before we find the answer let us look at certain historical points for a while.

In the ancient world wine was certainly consumed and promoted as a large part of both the lives of humans and the mythical lives of the gods. The god Dionysos is associated greatly with wine and is called the god of wine itself. Recently discovered Mosaics of Dionysos reveal images of Dionysos offering the nymph Akme wine whist she drank it out of a bowl. Silenus his companion is famed for his drunkenness and can be seen on ancient coins carrying a Wineskin over his shoulder. I have visited the ancient Cypriot Mosaics such as those found in the House of Dionysos at Paphos and found the ancient images to reveal that the ancients viewed wine as evil if it was used improperly. This of course is true. The ancients traditionally produced wine by treading and it could be fermented or converted to vinegar depending on the production. I have personally seen ancient wine presses from the Biblical era at various sites and been fascinated by their magnificent craft. The instinct I came upon extracted the delicious perfume of sweetness and ancient family life. It is almost like the ancient artefacts cry out simplicity through a way of life that cannot be truly understood in today’s world. Historians and archaeologist’s uncover sections of ancient life, but cannot actually understand what it was like to live in those times. No one can. We can only piece together bits of information, writings and relics and attempt to paint a picture with the essence. I suppose the point I am trying to make is

that we cannot take a word used today or a drink consumed today and assume it to be the very same as those of the Biblical era. It is a very ignorant claim indeed!

In the original Hebrew text of the Bible five different words are employed to describe wine. One such word is “yayin”²⁶ which refers to intoxicating wine, violence, sensual pleasure and the wrath of God. Another “Asys”²⁷ refers to new wine being freshly pressed sweet juice or grape juice²⁸. Such words promote wine as playing a large part in the Old Testament and being consumed by many leading characters mentioned therein. It must be said that wine was tolerated in moderation from the book of Genesis through to around the Proverbs. Indeed, Genesis 9: 20 informs us that after the flood “*Noah began to be a farmer and he planted a vineyard*”. Aside from the fact that this scripture can be taken typologically as Noah being a worker in the kingdom of God as a spiritual planter of a new vineyard, the text must also be taken literally. Noah had a vineyard and drank wine. In all scripture there is a human side and a divine side, in this case Noah planted a vineyard in a human sense and he also planted a vineyard in a divine sense. Interestingly enough verse 21 swiftly announces that Noah humanly drank of the wine he had made and was drunk. On the divine side Noah drank the wine of Christ and was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew noun “Yayin” translated wine occurs 140 times in the Old Testament and means alcoholic beverage. It is not a reference to the freshly pressed wine of “Asys” but an intoxicating wine. The proof lies not only in the Hebrew text but in Noah’s drunken condition that brought about an act not only of much controversy, but of much shame. He was naked in his tent and something happened of which I am not prepared to explore in this thesis. But what is to be explored is the disgrace and shame a drunken Noah brought upon himself. Today however, what is more disgraceful or shameful than a drunken man urinating in public or walking or falling along the streets in an intoxicated condition. He or she brings about public shame when a person loses all control of their actions because the God given brain has become intoxicated with a drug. A drunken man or women is no longer in full control of himself or herself when alcohol has been permitted to enter the bloodstream and the Bible declares this constantly. This is also confirmed in Genesis 19: 30-38, when the two daughters of Lot made their father drink wine so they could have sexual intercourse with him while he was intoxicated. Once again the Hebrew

²⁶ H3196. Strong's.

²⁷ H6071. Strong's.

²⁸ Expository dictionary of Bible words. Editor Stephen D. Renn. Page 1048. Hendrickson Publishers.

“Yayin” is employed to describe a man who is not in full control of his actions because of the consumption of wine. The same can also be said of the text in Isaiah 5: 11, “*Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night till wine inflames them*”. These scriptures undoubtedly refer to drunkenness and not drinking in moderation, but it must be said that one drink leads to another. But why was wine forbidden for a Nazarite to drink even in moderation during the period of a vow? (Numbers 6: 3, Judges 13: 4) and likewise for priests to abstain during their service as declared in Leviticus 10: 9. Well, the answer may be restraint, for you cannot come into the presence of almighty God when under the influence of alcohol. It may also be that those under the influence of alcohol cannot teach sound truth because they are under the influence of something other than the Holy Spirit. Hence the text, “*that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses*” (Leviticus 10: 11). It would be hard to read a commentary by an ancient or modern interpreter if you discovered that they were under the influence of alcohol when they were writing. Likewise would you ever listen wholly to a preacher under the influence while in the pulpit?

Leviticus demonstrates the influence of wine as an inability to discern between what is holy and unholy, clean and unclean. Hence the text, “*that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean*” (Leviticus 10: 10) Wine may also have been viewed unclean if it has not been boiled and treated for bacterial content and remains in its full ferment. It must be noted that wine in Leviticus 10: 9 is separated from strong drink as though they are both different. In other words, “*do not drink wine or intoxicating (Strong) drink*”. This text undoubtedly declares that wine was not regarded as an intoxicating strong drink and could not therefore be fully fermented. But before you disagree with me, I must point out that not all the wine was full fermented in the Old Testament and not all the wine was unfermented in the Old Testament. But never the less they were both called wine. Many Old Testament passages praise wine (Judges 9: 13, Psalms 104: 15) while Jeremiah 35: 5-6 definitely promotes abstinence. Hannah abstained from wine (1 Samuel 1: 14) and Hosea 2: 8 associates wine to the worship of ba’al. Proverbs 23: 31 says, “*who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine*” while Isaiah 5: 11 says, “*Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them*”.

It must be true to say that if a person indulges in alcohol it will make shipwreck of that persons life. Alcohol can offer a false joy and comfort but at a cost, it will cause a person to be secretly addicted. This is what the Old Testament scriptures proclaim and often wine can be linked with Paganism. In Hosea 3: 1 of the KJV the love of wine is linked to other gods, while in the NKJV the translation links wine to Paganism. Once again we find a “Woe” attached to those who consume wine like the Pagans do,

“Who has woe?...Those who linger long at the wine. Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things”.

Proverbs 23: 31-33.

Wine in the New Testament

When the angel Gabriel visited Zacharias while he was burning incense in the Jerusalem Temple, the angel told Zacharias that his wife would conceive and give birth to John the Baptist (Luke 1: 5-22). During the angels visit he announced that abstinence was to be a valuable requirement for the new covenant. In Luke 1: 15 the angel declared, “*he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink*”. The words of Gabriel were fulfilled as the scripture says, “*John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine*” Luke 7: 33. Now why would Gabriel declare abstinence as a requirement in the life of the first Old Testament type prophet of the New Testament and why was it fulfilled? Could the angel be declaring that abstinence is an essential requirement for New Testament believers? Well, the answer could be yes, for although the use of wine is not spoken against in the early part of the Old Testament, we find that wine is spoken against in the latter part of the Old Testament. And behold, in the final book of the New Testament, wine is a symbol of fornication and judgement.

The text reads like so;

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she had made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14: 8)

“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Revelation 14: 9-10) ²⁹.

Although the Old Testament permits the consuming of wine in moderation, the New Testament repeatedly promotes abstinence, and I say this with Biblical evidence. The proof lies within the text itself towards the final letters in the New Testament. For example, when Paul wrote to Timothy he said, “*No longer drink only water*” Note here and let the text speak to you that Paul is declaring in this letter that Timothy drank only water. Permit me to repeat the quote, reads like so;

“*No longer drink only water*”.

The text is undeniably declaring that Timothy ‘drank only water’ and abstained from alcohol and therefore wine. Timothy drank only water as did Paul. If Paul drank wine Timothy would have also drunk wine since Timothy closely followed Paul’s lifestyle, (but I will come back to that point later). Paul continues in this letter to say, “*but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities*”. This in the correct context is employing the *use* of wine as a medicine for Timothy, it is not a mandate for Christians in the 21st century to drink wine as a relaxing quiet drink after or with a meal in search or enjoyment and long term health. It is arguable if 21st century wine is actually good for your health. We cannot apply 1st century wine with its pure family or individual orientated manufacture to 21st century wine with it’s massive factory manufacture. When Paul said, “*use a little wine*” the word “use” it can mean ‘*employ*’. In other words, use or employ the wine or maybe even add the wine to the water you were previously drinking. It is possible that water may have often become polluted where Timothy was living and if true would have been in no way acceptable for drinking. But since the context of the passage in question encourages Timothy to drink water, the polluted water theory is very weak. The Romans and the Greeks had constant pure water flowing springs, ³⁰ and the builders of the Cities would have built fountains where there was a good spring ³¹. If however polluted water had made Timothy ill ‘which I doubt was the case’ the adding of fresh wine to good water would do well for Timothy’s stomach. Can anyone argue against this? Such was standard practice during the second temple period. Philo, one of the most valuable Jewish authors

²⁹ See also Jeremiah 25: 15-16, 49: 12.

³⁰ It is generally accepted that Timothy lived in Ephesus at the time of Paul’s writing. Ephesus is near Miletus in Asia Minor which history reveals had a good water spring which flowed greatly through fountains in the market place. It is unlikely that such a city as Ephesus did not have a fantastic spring.

³¹ Everyday things in ancient Greece by Marjories & C. H. B. Quennell. Second edition, 1954. Pages 126-127. B. T. Batsford LTD.

from the time of Jesus, wrote in his discourse *on drunkenness*³² of the many variations of the mixed wines clearly referred to in Proverbs 23: 30. Thus proving by only one of many historical accounts that the practice of mixing wine was as common in the ancient world as eating Chicken is today.

Thus Paul's wise instruction to Timothy is not a mandate for Christians to drink modern day wine for general health reasons like that of eating fruit & veg, it is an instruction to add pure uncorrupted wine to water as a medicine for a poorly stomach if it is required.

The Wedding at Cana

Let us draw our attention and imaginations to the 1st century land of Cana near Capernaum, where the exciting Jewish wedding at Cana took place. John records that “*Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding*”³³ and “*the mother of Jesus was there*”³⁴. Joy and celebration filled the air and one can barely imagine how people 2000 years ago celebrated such events. Things must have been very simple yet exiting. No worldly loud music, lights or bars, and no worldly people indecently dressed acting shamefully. Things were celebrated yet done so in a godly and orderly biblical manner and such must be stressed that it was not a worldly event but a godly one. We cannot compare today’s gentile weddings to this wedding.

The Bible declares that Cana was the hometown of Nathaniel (John 21:2) and that when the marriage ceremony was over, Jesus traveled to Capernaum (John 2:12), and revisited Cana where He met the centurion (John 4:46,51). Such texts are the only mentions of Cana in the New Testament, by which we can infer that Cana was in Galilee, West of the lake. It is from references such as these that we can deduce that Cana was not a large town and could therefore not have had a great deal of access to very much wine. Some have argued that the first supply of wine used at the wedding of Cana was not fermented but this claim fails to fairly correspond with the biblical and historical facts. The none miraculous wine was fermented and it is claimed that John’s gospel deals with the account of the final year of Christ’s incarnate ministry, so it is rightly argued that the wedding at Cana must have taken place in March at the beginning of the final year³⁵. This conclusion rightly substantiates the fact that the none miraculous wine at the wedding of Cana was

³² Philo. On drunkenness (*De Ebrietate*).

³³ John 2: 2.

³⁴ John 2: 1.

³⁵ Should Christians drink? Peter Masters. Page 32. The Wakeman trust. London.

fermented. The ripening time for grapes were harvested in towards the end of August through to September³⁶ this means that the wine drunk at the wedding prior to the miracle was fully fermented and produced the previous season. This wine was old and mature and would have been subject to the wine processing of the day. This is a historical absolute certainty and not an opinion. Since Jesus referred to putting old wine in new wine skins as an error, it is unlikely that when He performed the miracle of turning water into wine that He would put old wine in the water pots. Therefore the wine of the miracle was new wine and therefore fresh, it was not old mature wine but the best fresh wine. This is made clear to us in John 2: 9-10 when the master of the feast did not know it was wine until he had tasted it. If it were fermented as in the sense of old wine it would have been red and easily identifiable, unless the wine was from heaven.

Some have argued that when John 2: 6 informs us that there were six water pots containing 30 gallons of water each, that such would hold 1,440 pints of wine. If 200 people were present at the wedding it would amount to seven pints per day per person. But this theory cannot be true since history reveals ancient Jewish weddings lasted from 3 - 7 days and not a single day. Samson's marriage feast lasted 7 days³⁷ and if 400 people were present at such an event it would equal a ration of half a pint of wine per person each day³⁸. This is not enough for anyone, 'half a pint per day'. The only way it would spread is if it were watered down and mixed with other fluids, 'water' as the text says the miraculous wine first contained. Thus mixed wine would not be strong enough to intoxicate anyone. Ancient Roman history reveals that Cato³⁹ permitted his slaves to drink no more than a pint of mixed wine per day⁴⁰. The mixed wine mentioned by the ancients is spoken of throughout the ancient world and is a historical fact and not an opinion. My opinion however through exegetical treatment of the scriptures is that the Bible does not condemn the use of mixed wine but only the manufacture of mixed wine as though it was unmixed⁴¹. The historical and verifiable truth of the mixed wines of the ancients does not reinforce the view that many Christians unknowingly promote that the visitors to the wedding at Cana must have been drunk if they ran out of wine. After all if the wine was unmixed and fully fermented it goes to say that the visitors must have been drunk in order for the wine to have ran out. But such is untrue. If I for example were to drink one glass of wine at one time, I would be slightly unsteady

³⁶ Handbook to life in Bible times. J. A. Thompson. Page 135. IVP.

³⁷ Judges 15: 10-18.

³⁸ Should Christians drink? Peter Masters. Pages 31-32. The Wakeman trust. London.

³⁹ Cato the elder. Marcus Porcius 234-149 BC. A Roman statesman who wrote the 1st history of Rome.

⁴⁰ Everyday life in ancient Rome by F. R. Cowel. Second edition 1962. Page 88. B. T. Batsford LTD.

⁴¹ Isaiah 1: 21-23.

for I have never drank any alcohol at any time in my life. I like fruit juice, cranberry, black-current etc. Thus if the visitors to the wedding at Cana were to drink all the wine in an unmixed condition, it would go to say that they must have been drunk. But if we follow the correct understanding of the view I have presented previously then half a pint of good wine mixed per day would not intoxicate anyone. Especially not if it was mixed with water as history proves time and time again.

Now then, most agree that wine was a common drink in the ancient world and the text of John certainly claims that wine was consumed at the ancient wedding at Cana. But, one thing that is not mentioned is the preparation that wine underwent before it was drunk. I speak this purely in relation to the none miraculous wine, as in the wine that ran out. In other words, when we eat Chicken or Turkey, Pork or vegetables at a celebration meal, it must be pointed out that we are eating a preparation of foods that have been prepared by cooking. People eat Chicken but do not eat it raw for it is cooked first. People eat Pork, but do not eat it raw. People eat vegetables such as Potatoes, Carrots, Cabbage or Cauliflower and do not always eat it raw. All kinds of things can be added to the food to bring out the best of the flavour. In England we favour fish cooked whereas in Japan fish is favoured uncooked. Many drink Lemonade, which is made of Lemons but is not made of Lemons entirely. Many drink Orange juice but such is not always made up of Oranges entirely. Many drink diluted Black-current which cannot be denied as being black-current but argued as not 100% black-current but around 50% if it is a good strong drink. Some diluted drinks are manufactured as diet drinks and mixed juice drinks whereas some are undiluted and therefore not mixed. This is the way it is, who can argue against it? Likewise not all wine in the ancient world was 100% wine but underwent many different preparations in order to rid the pure juice of the awful taste of bacteria. These processes turned the sugar into Vinegar and according to Peter Masters, the normal fermentation time in ancient Israel was three to four days, in contrast to the six-month period of the Greeks⁴². Roman history demonstrates that mixed wines would often be administered to Romans at celebrations when slaves would bring in mixed wines with water. Women were also forbidden to touch wine unless it had been heavily diluted⁴³. The grapes would begin to ferment as soon as they were pressed and underwent a summery of fermentation processes including being denied oxygen. The finished process would bring forth a fermented wine that is estimated at between 2% and 6% alcohol⁴⁴. This is a far cry from the spirits of today and no one is justified to compare them. Strong drinks of

⁴² Should Christians drink? Peter Masters. Pages 19-20. The Wakeman trust. London.

⁴³ Everyday life in ancient Rome by F. R. Cowell. Page 78 and page 88. 1961-62. B.T. Batsford LTD.

⁴⁴ Should Christians drink? Peter Masters. Pages 19-21. The Wakeman trust. London.

today can range from 40% - 75%. While in Bible times strong drink was 6%. Thus it can be easily argued that the wine at the wedding at Cana had undergone the traditions and production of the ancient Jews just as the wine drunk at weddings today have undergone the productions of the modern industry. Once again this is not an opinion but a historical fact and a present day practice.

Thus if the world were to continue for another 2000 years and a historian wished to find out how wine was produced in our time, he would need to search the ancients to find an answer. In this case we would be the ancients and our words would be regarded as history, maybe even this document may turn up. So if people are to understand the ancients, people must search history to discover the ancient Jewish process of wine making. I say this because food and drink is often prepared differently in various cultures and countries. This, I think, is what happened at the wedding of Cana, it was fermented but later mixed with water and consumed. A fact that J. C. Ryle who has a strong influence upon many ministers and theologians did not promote. Ryle claimed that if we deny ourselves the usage of wine and claim that the drinking of wine is a sin and are therefore promote ‘teetotalism’ then we are denouncing the plain meaning of scripture ⁴⁵. I respectfully disagree with J.C. Ryle's claim here since I think the argument appears neglectful of the Jewish way of things.

Jesus Drank the Fruit of the Vine

When Mary the mother of the son of man came to Jesus at the wedding at Cana she said, “They have no wine” ⁴⁶. Jesus replied an informative comment, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with me?” It is in these words that one can clearly deduce that Jesus did not drink the wine supplied at the wedding at Cana. His own words testify that the wine had nothing of any interest to Him. Although many theologians and expositors of scripture interpret Jesus words in this passage in many different ways, the context only spells out His lack of association with wine on this occasion. My paraphrase of His words confess this truth, ‘if they have ran out of wine what has it got to do with me’. Although some would use Luke 8: 34, “The son of man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber’” as proof that Christ drank wine, the problem remains that this scripture relates to an accusation against Christ and not a truth. If you use this text to say Christ drank wine you must say He was a winebibber, which in the Greek means

⁴⁵ Expository thoughts on the gospels by J. C. Ryle. John, chap 2: 10. Pages 99-100. Baker.

⁴⁶ John 2: 3.

‘an excessive drinker’⁴⁷. This all Christians know is untrue and also if you believe Luke 8: 34 communicates that Christ drank wine you must also say that He was a glutton and that John the Baptist had a demon (Luke 7: 33).

In Matthew 26: 29, Mark 14: 25, Luke 22: 18 Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper. In this supper there is no mention of wine being used or drank by either Christ or the disciples. In the *Mishnah*⁴⁸ it is stated that only four cups of wine were used and so mixed with water because the wine was considered to strong to be drunk un-mixed⁴⁹. The term Mazug was employed to communicate this wine, but in the scriptural account of the Last Supper the term used for wine is *fruit of the vine* not Mazug or wine. This is not normal wine but as the text says, “*fruit of the vine*”. No one either in any of the Greek texts or otherwise can argue that the fruit of the vine is a reference to fermented wine. The vine means the grape, and the drink originates from the East, some say in Margiana. Moses, Homer, and Herodotus wrote about it. When Jesus instituted the last supper He said, “*Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God*” (Mark 14: 25). Note that Jesus said, “*when I drink it new*”, meaning new wine. The Greek translated “new” also holds the meaning of freshness with respect to age⁵⁰. The wine spoken of in this passage is not fermented, both the Greek and the context explain the text this way. This can also be confirmed by the fact that Jesus stated that He would not drink the fruit of the vine until He drank it with the disciples in the Kingdom. Yet Jesus drank wine mixed with vinegar when He was on the cross and He drank the fruit of the vine during the period of the resurrection. Why did He do this when we are told in Numbers 6: 3 that a Nazarite, “shall drink no vinegar of wine...Neither shall he drink the liquor of grapes”. Why the apparent mix up? Well, the answer lies in the initial statement regarding the fruit of the vine and His fulfilled Nazarite vow. The fruit of the vine was not the same drink He put to His mouth while He was on the cross and it was not drunk until all was fulfilled, the text of John’s gospel substantiates this. If we say otherwise we say the Bible is contradictory. John 19: 28-30 explains that Jesus “*knowing that all things were now accomplished*” said “**I thirst!**”. Verse 29 explains that someone, “*filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a hyssop, and put it to His mouth*”. Verse 30 tells us very clearly that Jesus received the sour wine. So then if the drink consumed at

⁴⁷ Footnote contained in The Holy Bible, Luke 7: 34. NKJV. Reference edition. Thomas Nelson.

⁴⁸ The Mishnah (Meaning Instruction) is a collection of Jewish precepts that form the content of The Talmud.

⁴⁹ Should Christians Drink? Peter Masters. Page 23. Wakeman Trust. London.

⁵⁰ καϊνός. G2537. Strong’s.

the Last Supper was the same wine Jesus received on the cross, the text has totally contradicted itself. Therefore the answer is very clear and understandable to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Christ had fulfilled His Nazarite vow and therefore broke no vow to abstain from the vinegar of wine or the promise to not drink the fruit of the vine until the kingdom had come. Once Christ had risen from the dead the kingdom had come and so He drank with the disciples of the “New wine” being the very same unfermented “fruit of the vine”. This is what the disciples were accused of being drunk with as stated in Acts, “*They are full of new wine*” Acts 2: 13. If a person drank enough of this wine, as in “*They are full of new wine*” they would be a little intoxicated. The Greek translated “full” means intoxicated ⁵¹, so the translation would rather say, “They are intoxicated with new wine”. This text reinforces the statement of Paul, “*Do not be drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit*” Ephesians 5: 18. Clearly the early Christians manifested a behaviour that appeared as though they were drunk because they spoke in tongues. This is the only thing the context communicates, but when Peter stood up and raised his voice he clearly announced both verbally and in behaviour that they were not drunk, for it was far too early in the day for drunkenness ⁵². Thus again demonstrating the Joy and spender Christians receive comes not from wine but from the Holy Spirit at all hours of the day. “*Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud And He shall hear my voice*” Psalm 55: 17.

There are two main arguments that I hope to conclude with in this writing.

1. That wine had been accepted at various times of the Bible, just as Polygamy had been tolerated in Old Testament times but later condemned. Concluding with my argument that wine was tolerated but abstaining from wine was introduced to Christians at the later part of the New Testament.
2. That all Christians are a kingdom of priests and should be constantly working for the gospel and are therefore required as a holy priesthood to abstain from all alcohol. These are my two main proceeding arguments and I hope to conclude with these after I have said what I desire to say.

⁵¹ μεστόω. G3325. Strong's.

⁵² Acts 2: 14-15.

The Introduction of Abstinence

As I have stated before, Timothy drank only water and Paul instructed him to add a little wine for his health's sake (1 Timothy 5: 23). This of course is a good use for this type of wine if a person is sick. It is not however a mandate for a Christian to drink wine in the hope that it might maintain his health. But even stronger than this is the clear evidence that Paul abstained from wine also. This is made clear to us in 2 Timothy 3: 10-11, where Paul writes of Timothy's complete following of Paul's lifestyle. If Paul had not abstained from alcohol and Timothy had not held closely the lifestyle of Paul, Timothy would not have needed Paul's instruction to now add some wine with the water. Timothy would have simply done that already without following the instruction of Paul. It is furthermore confirmed in the mandate that Elders are not to be "given to wine" at all ⁵³ not even for health's sake. Thus, the command to be "sober" ⁵⁴ and watchful is a command that was relayed to the Thessalonians twice within the context of abstaining from things that are harmful to salvation and displeasing to God. This is reiterated in Titus 2: 2, 1 Peter 1: 13, 5: 8, and in Romans 14: 21 Paul tells us "it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine". Thus leading us by the context into the truth that abstinence is a good example to others and a good practice for ourselves. It cannot be said that abstinence is a good example for all, because not all suffer temptation to drink alcohol. If any claim that the consumption of alcohol leads others astray, they are wrong. It can lead people further astray if they are astray already, for there are many who do not suffer temptation to drink wine at all just as many do not suffer temptation to take drugs. Myself included. It is the command to "be sober" that is the strongest, for one drink always leads to another, just as one usage of drugs leads to another or one act of sexual intercourse leads to another. The soberness spoken of in scripture is not an acceptance of being tipsy but total abstinence and total soberness.

Thus I believe that the New Testament teaches abstinence towards the latter part of the book, just as the remarkable scripture relaying John the Baptist and his total abstinence teaches at the beginning of the book. Thus if we say that the New Testament promotes drinking in moderation, we may also say that we can also indulge in sins as long as it is done moderately. For we are commanded likewise to abstain from sexual

⁵³ 1 Timothy 3: 3.

⁵⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5: 6-8.

immorality, coveting, theft, lying almost as equally as we are commanded to “be sober”.

The Abstinence of the Priest

“The Lord spoke to Aaron saying: “Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations” Leviticus 10: 8-9

“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” 1 Peter 2: 9

The Apostle Peter wrote in the above text that Christians are a royal priesthood who should always be ready to minister and give witness to both Christians and none-believers. This is made clear to us in 2 Peter 2: 9, 1 Peter 3: 15. It is also stated in Leviticus 10: 8-9 that a priest should abstain from alcohol when he is in the tabernacle which is the temple. 1 Corinthians 6: 19 clearly testifies that the body of Christ is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The conclusion then is that we are a kingdom of priests and should therefore at no time be under the influence of any alcohol for we should always be ready to give a witness to none-believers whilst in a state of soberness. Therefore since alcohol is in no way acceptable within the temple of God, alcohol is in no way acceptable within our bodies. It has been said among Jewish people that when the second temple was destroyed, people abstained from drinking wine ⁵⁵. How much more should we not drink wine if it destroys the temple of the Holy Spirit? 2 Peter 3: 1 states that the Christians mind is pure and we are to keep our minds pure from corruption and the influence of the world. If however a Christian consumes alcohol not only is he or she under the influence of the world but the mind is not free from corruption. “When wine enters, sense goes out; when wine enters, the secret comes out” ⁵⁶. It is *under the influence*. Just as a person in England cannot legally drive a car whilst over the limit, neither can a Christian walk the true walk of Christ whilst he or she is under the influence of anything but the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Alcohol travels to the brain and it is not hard to see the polluted mind when a man or women shamefully walks unsteadily along the pathway on a weekend evening. Alcohol makes a women lose dignity.

But of course I know of no one who is arguing that a drunken condition is acceptable for a Christian but moderation? To whom I would say that

⁵⁵ Everyman’s Talmud by Abraham Cohen. Page 233. Schocken books. New York.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 232.

moderate consumption of alcohol is no different to the moderate intake of drugs. If we are to moderately drink alcohol then let us moderately do drugs in order to stimulate our minds and expand our imaginations? Let us smoke cigarettes and Cigars to relax and stimulate the mind and provoke thought. Let us roll around naked in mud to help our skin or even join a nudist camp, for the exposure of the body to the naked air is good for us. In other words what I am saying is that many things that may or may not be good for our bodies, minds and so forth, but not all things are beneficial or godly. If we indulge in the world then let us go all the way and make worldly practising sinners of ourselves, just as if we can depend upon the flesh then let us go all the way and make eunuchs of ourselves. Oh no my friends, we all fail in many things, we all struggle with our sins, but let us fight the good fight and aim at rejecting that which is contrary to the one true God. Instead of drinking worldly manufactured wine let us drink the wine of truth and be soberly intoxicated by divine presence of the Lord Jesus, for Christ and His love is better than wine. And if a person desires to make and drink wine as they did back in the Biblical era, it would prove interesting.

Article Three

AVOIDING SHIPWRECK OF THE FAITH

“This charge I commit to you...wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck” 1 Timothy 1: 18-19

The Mediterranean coastline is literally littered with ancient and modern shipwrecks from before the time of the incarnate Christ to the present day. Many of these shipwrecks remain well-preserved and untouched by nautical archaeologists and some shipwrecks even date from the time of St Paul. One such shipwreck recently discovered in 2001 lay near St Thomas bay at the Munxar Reef of the eastern end of Malta's coastline. Spear fisherman and divers reported the sightings of four anchor stocks at a depth of fifteen fathoms (90 feet) and two at a more shallow depth. Many believe these anchors to be the actual anchors from Paul's shipwreck as described in Acts 27: 28 and Acts 27: 30 and they do not lie in Malta's traditional site of St Paul's bay but at St Thomas bay, Malta. This find revealed hundreds of amphora's and ceramic artefacts demonstrating that many ships headed for the bay when they were caught in a certain storm but the vessels were actually wrecked and unrepairable. This historical facts demonstrate a great spiritual truth that once a ship is wrecked it cannot be repaired, such as the shipwreck discovered from Greece's golden age of in the Turkish Aegean where an amphora containing cattle ribs was discovered on the sea bed alongside anchors and other artefacts⁵⁷. Thus the once beautiful ship of craftsmanship and fine construction is now rotted away and in the abyss. Thus as ancient pottery and finds can reveal the past, they can also tell us a thing or two concerning the future, your future and my future.

There is something comfortable and appealing about a normal life and a normal everyday way of living. There is something well and good in the normal way of life, you work, you come home and you relax at night and do whatever you feel like doing. At weekends you may go shopping, watch sports on the television in the afternoon, go camping or fishing and on Sundays go to a car boot or slum around the house or do whatever you feel like doing? This generally the normal way of life is it not? There is not always a great deal of stress involved with the normal life, in my opinion. It is easy and simple, not very deep and ignorant of what goes on around us. During my own days of normal living and employment, life

⁵⁷ National Geographic. March 2002. Pages 102-117.

was so simple and easy. Scarcely will anyone really strive or grieve for the soul and welfare of another person outside of the family. We are naturally self-centred, selfish, ignorant and consumed with ourselves and with pleasure. Many Christians continue to be selfish and do not fight their selfish natures. It is the nature of the flesh to seek out and to gain whatever appeals to us at the moment. This is why so many industries and commercial business people are filthy rich. They know and tease the nature of human beings and entice their selfish natures with whatever is current at the moment. For selfish people are never content or happy with anything but we who are Christians should be content with what we have been given at all times and should never grumble or moan (Philippians 4: 11, 1 Timothy 6: 8, Hebrews 13: 5). These days I hear so many Christians who pick and moan about everything and have become so cynical and weak that I hardly know where to begin. Brothers and sisters it ought not to be so, for we should rejoice in the greatest of all gifts that we have been freely given and that being Salvation. If the Church we are in crumbles and our houses fail down, let us rejoice in the house of the Lord that will stand forever.

It would be very easy for a Christian to slacken off, live a normal life and cease to fight the good fight. There are many Christians including myself who at time think that we may live the Christian life and keep safe by not rejecting the faith or Christ. Thus not sinning because we still believe but keep a little quiet over things that we once spoke out concerning. There are many who lose their zeal and lose their drive to speak out against error and lies by leaving people to their own. So it this is true and acceptable before God, why would Paul refer to the faith as a battle from start to finish? Hence the scripture, "*Fight the good fight of faith*" 1 Timothy 6: 12. Why do we need to put on the armour of God (Ephesians 6: 11) if we are not in a savage battle? Thus the answer is truly this, It is a battle from start to finish to be happy in God. So therefore we must embrace the battle before we can embrace the victory.

Now regarding the scripture communicating a shipwrecked faith we must point out that Paul uses his words carefully and it is no coincidence that he uses the term 'shipwreck' to describe what can happen to selfish believers who fall from the faith. So in light of this let us look at the circumstances of a shipwreck. It is hard to suppose that those who hand crafted the ships the apostles of the New Testament travelled upon would have known what they were part of. The ship mentioned in Acts 28: 11 whose figure-head had Castor and Pollux engraved upon it signified the ancient belief that such gods would protect the vessel. Little did they know that their gods could not save anyone and that the journey Paul and

Luke had taken from Melita (Malta) to Rome was not safe because of the idolatrous images upon the vessel, but purely through the Lord Jesus Christ and His sovereign mercy (Acts 27: 22-25).

Now then if we look a little closely at the details given in Acts 27 regarding the shipwreck off the coast of Malta, we can see some of the details relating the shipwreck of the faith. It must be noted that in order for a shipwreck to take place someone somewhere who is in control of driving the vessel must lose focus or direction. In the case of the shipwreck off Malta a storm brewed up and wise advice was ignored (Acts 27: 9-11). Despite the fact that there is still wind in the sails, which can signify the Holy Spirit (John 3: 8) the shipwreck occurs through the ignoring of wise instruction "*A fool despiseth his father's instruction*" Proverbs 15: 5. Paul warned the crew that the voyage would end in disaster but they rejected his advice through their own human and self-centred reasoning. Thus there is a very significant time and place upon where this shipwreck happened, it happened at a place, "*where two seas met*" Acts 27: 41. Thus symbolising the flesh and the spirit, which are both at war with each other but raging in power and strength at a certain moment. Thus if a Christian were to give rise to his flesh and be strong in the faith also, a shipwreck is bound to occur. It is undeniable that once a shipwreck has happened the ship is irretrievable and destroyed, and can hardly be recognised, it sinks into the abyss and is long forgotten.

Now it must be noted that at no time does anyone plan a shipwreck? Let us take Titanic for example. Although some may argue that the Titanic was sunk purposely as part of a deceitful insurance claim, it must be more strongly pointed out that no one plans to make shipwreck of the faith, it just happens. Most of the time it happens through careless behavior and a slackening off of detail and godly living. A man or women may indulge slightly in sin or in selfishness and because the sinful nature is not bound but unbound, it is hard to kick against the goads that stick in the flesh. Thus when the temptation comes in whatever form it manifests, the person indulges and suddenly makes shipwreck of the faith. Now it must be pointed out that most men and women who are married with children and have good families have never set out to destroy such goodness by a fleeting moment of sin. Most people have nothing but good intentions to keep things going well and strong, but sadly due to immorality and sin, families are destroyed and marriages are shipwrecked and many who were truly of the faith have made shipwreck of the faith because of the fleeting pleasures of sin. Now when I say this I am not primarily relaying the issue of sex or adultery, that is just one aspect of sin. I am referring to the many aspects of things that can bring about a massive shipwreck of a

ship that was once so strong and beautiful. Selfishness is one of those things that if not bridled and caged up can lead to coveting and coveting causes shipwreck because those who covet will not get into heaven (1 Corinthians 6: 9-10). For coveting can lead to perdition (1 Timothy 6:9) misery (1 Timothy 6: 10) and even rejection of the faith (1 Timothy 6: 10). Coveting can also lead to murder and we know that murderers will never inherit the kingdom of heaven (Revelation 21:8).

In John 21: 20-22 Jesus speaks to John concerning his future and Peter questions what Jesus had said to John and Jesus replied, "*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me*" (John 21:22) Thus "Follow thou Jesus" for you have no right to covet another mans ministry, wife, home, place of study, qualifications, money career, talent etc, what has it got to do with you what another man does or has? If you will only be content with what you have, you will not covet and will therefore reject your selfish nature and follow Jesus, and in turn you will receive great rewards from Christ. Thus selfishness can lead to sexual immorality and sinful pleasures such as overeating and gluttony. Coveting and lust can lead to theft and thieves will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6: 10). Thus unless we bridle the sinful nature by pleading with Christ to cleanse and mediate for us and for the Holy Spirit to strengthen us that we might glorify the Father, it will be very difficult and impossible for man to not make shipwreck of the faith. And please do not deceive yourself into believing that it is impossible for you to make shipwreck of your faith, for Paul says it is possible and those who believe otherwise are not following biblical truth. It is real Christianity that I speak of and one that firstly requires repentance and believing by faith to good works. This faith requires human responsibility and hard grafting. Remember the more a ship is well crafted and strong, the harder it will be to be shipwrecked. The more the driver is calm and consumes wise advice, the less likely his ship will be ensnared in a disastrous shipwreck that involves not only himself but many more lives also. Thus if we make shipwreck of our faith by arriving at a place where the two seas clash strongly, (Acts 27: 41) symbolizing the Flesh and Spirit, not only will we sink and be destroyed but we may also bring other people down with us. And that is not good or desirable. So rather than live a life that is unsure of our election and calling (2 Peter 1: 10) let us walk rightly and receive the power from on high to embrace the storm and come out the other side safe and secure. Yes at times it is so hard and tiring and we may feel like giving up, but if we continue in Christ He will not let us down but will stand beside us comforting us and carrying us. So if God is before us and standing in and amongst us, let us walk worthy of

Jesus and deny all the sinful characteristics of the flesh in the avoiding of a shipwrecked faith.

Article Five

ST PAULS THORN

“There was given to me a thorn in the flesh” 2 Corinthians 12: 7

Paul was a great character and a man to be admired. He had his failings like the best of us, but he continued to persevere and head on for the goal that Jesus had laid out for him to press onto. He was a great theologian and a great apostle. His words ring loud and clear with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and his human efforts and achievements were fantastic, if any human effort can be. But aside from all this Paul still suffered and battled with something he called a “thorn in the flesh”. He tells us in 2 Corinthians 12: 7 that his thorn was buffeted by a ‘messenger of Satan’ and in verse 8 he tells us that he had pleaded with the Lord three times to remove this thorn, but Jesus did not remove it. But He rather told Paul that His grace is sufficient for him (2 Corinthians 12: 9). Now it is by the Lords reply concerning “grace” that I argue this ‘thorn’ in Paul’s flesh must have been related to sin or some harmful temptation to sin that could hinder his salvation. If the ‘thorn’ were not related to sin and concerned a matter of a physical nature then why would the Lord remind Paul of His grace in salvation residing over Paul’s thorn? Thus the words of Jesus, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12: 9) tells of Paul’s weakness and inability to remove the thorn meaning that it must have been something beyond his capabilities. An apostle had the authority over sickness and since Paul employs the Greek “astheneia” which can mean ‘moral frailty’ concerning his infirmities, it is safe to conclude that Paul’s thorn was a moral issue and one that he himself was frail concerning. This frailty caused Paul to rest upon the grace of God and to teach others to do likewise concerning their failings. For all of us have our failings and if we sin, we feel awful and often ask the lord to forgive us. Therefore since Paul sought the Lord to take this thorn away from him, we must should it to be a temptation of some kind in relation to sin or enticing one to sin.

Now then, much has been suggested concerning the identity of the thorn given to Paul in his flesh. Some have suggested that the thorn was a demon or an eye disease. Others have suggested it was lust, a theory that Calvin utterly rejected. Tertullian thought it an earache, while Chrysostom considered it a headache and others have propagated some kind of speech impediment? Adam Clarke considered the thorn to have

been the heartache and suffering Paul suffered while at Corinth, and denied this scripture had anything to do with sin. But the problem with these interpretations is simply that they must be untrue and our fellow interpreters could not see further than the term “thorn in the flesh” being related to the human body. For the term “flesh” as referring to an ailment in the literal human body is not entirely correct. The term need not apply to the body at all but to the human nature or weakness with a certain sin or sins. Calvin agreed that the context of this passage does not refer to the human body but the part of the soul not yet completely regenerated therefore exposed to all temptation ⁵⁸. This in my opinion is one of the nearest understandings I have read concerning the text though I confess that others have read more than I. Nevertheless most commentaries stumble at this verse and fail to offer a solid insight. One such commentary on Corinthians written by Colin G. Kruse claims that there is “Insufficient data to decide what affliction he (Paul) suffered” ⁵⁹. But if a Christian man suffers with something or some kind of distinct sin, he will bring it up many times as James said, “confess your faults one to another” (James 5: 16). Therefore if we are to understand Paul’s thorn and relate his suffering to ourselves we must look to Paul’s own words in the hope of searching it out. Therefore let us read Paul.

In 2 Corinthians 12: 7 Paul employs the Greek “sarx” translated flesh, within the context of temptation and we can view this by reviewing his own words in his letter to the Galatians, “*Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh (Sarx) ye despised not*” Galatians 4: 13-14. Clearly Paul’s thorn in the flesh was a temptation and a weakness he suffered with, as do all, that kept him humble. Christ requires a humble servant who is weak in his own strength but mighty in the power of Christ. Augustine I am told suffered greatly with sexual temptations and his temptation caused him to strive more and more after the holiness of God and dependency upon Christ. For if a man were deemed perfect within the context of being free from all temptation, he could be over exalted by both himself and others and would be useless to Christ. And that is not good. Therefore the context of Paul’s thorn is not within the context of flesh of the body but humility in Christ. A physical impediment such as bad eyesight or headaches, earache or poor speech would scarcely make a man humble. Many Christians have such things and are not humble. Therefore the thorn must be within the context of sin or temptation that causes the Christian to be humbled and repent in total dependence upon the grace of Christ. Thus temptation is the key and Paul must have suffered with temptations. No one can argue that a person can be tempted

⁵⁸ Calvin's commentaries. Volume XX. 2 Corinthians 12: 7. Pages 373-374. Baker Books.

⁵⁹ New Bible Commentary. 2 Corinthians 12: 7. Page 1204. IVP.

with sin if he or she no longer suffers with any sin or is enticed by sinful pleasure. Therefore it would be silly to assume that Paul did not suffer with the same temptations at varying times, as most Christians have done over the many centuries. If Paul did not suffer human temptations that he could not have been human and we know that he was fully human. Therefore to use and explore Paul's own words we can see his thorn in the flesh as being a temptation that is harmful to salvation and not a physical impediment, the body is already fallen and should not be our concern, but spiritual things are what concerns the true Christian. If we look to Paul's letters we will see these things staring us in the face, that the flesh is not necessarily the body but the fallen nature and the thorn must be spiritual also pricking at the fallen nature.

"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" Acts 9: 5

When Paul was first converted the Lord Jesus said to him, "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" now what does that mean? And why was it said to Paul? Well it is generally accepted ⁶⁰ and I see no wrong in its interpretation that Jesus was speaking as He often did in parables and meant that as a horse or oxen obeyed the commandment of its master in not kicking against the pricks on the masters feet so not to cause the pricks to go into the skin. To put this in more simple terms I could explain a master and the horse, where like in the days of the old west when a cowboy had spikes on his boots and those spikes hit the flesh of the horse when the horse kicked against his instructions. Thus it is hard for the horse to go against the master and it will be hard for Christians to work against Christ, if we know Him? Thus Christ is applying this sentence to Himself in the fact that we cannot reject His command and if we do it will be hard against the flesh, and He will cause us pain. Thus if we reject the commandments and do our own thing we are kicking against the pricks and our flesh will cause us pain. The Lord permits this to happen for our benefit in the pursuit of salvation and therefore we can only kick against the pricks by rejecting Christ or His commandments. Therefore sin is the heart of the matter and we must view Paul's thorn as a matter or sin and not a physical issue. But what was Paul's thorn? Well let us look further.

⁶⁰ Calvin commentary on Acts 9: 5.

ST PAUL AND COVETING

“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel” Acts 20: 33

Clement⁶¹ when writing to the Corinthian church claimed that both Peter and Paul suffered with Jealousy and envy till death⁶². It is this widely accepted authentic text in line with the Biblical text that offers us a clue to Paul’s thorn in the flesh. Why would he mention coveting so much within the text of scripture in relation to himself and not anyone else. As we know that Jealousy and coveting go hand in hand we can employ the words of Philo who claimed that jealousy and covetousness is a disease that spreads around the body⁶³. Thus there can be no doubt that the jealousy spoken of by Clement in relation to Paul and the coveting spoken of by Paul in relation to himself are one and the same. And one such way I can authenticate this is by reviewing Paul’s own words and the words of Peter whom Clement connects with Paul. It is no small matter that Paul turns around the sin of coveting by instructing fellow believers to “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Corinthians 12: 31) and “covet to prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14: 39). Thus Paul knew that this sin could be turned around for good if not conquered. Paul confirms this when he says to the Corinthian church, “I am jealous for you with godly jealousy”. 2 Corinthians 11: 2. Thus not all jealousy is ungodly for God Himself is a “jealous God” Exodus 20: 5 but covetous jealousy that leads to more and more unrighteousness is a sin. As Hodge said, “it depends on the context whether the desire be good or bad”⁶⁴.

St Paul wrote the following;

*“I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said,
“You shall not covet”. But sin taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire”* Romans 7: 7-8

The KJV translates this text “I had not known lust” while the NKJV translates the text “I would not have known Covetousness”. It is clear

⁶¹ Clement was a disciple of Peter and after a leader of the church in Rome. History unquestionably confirms this fact.

⁶² The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. Contained in Early Christian writings. Page 25. Penguin classics. See also Lost Scriptures by Bart D. Ehrman. 1 Clement. 5.4-5. Page 170. Oxford University Press. 2003.

⁶³ Philo. The special laws. 1V. On Coveting. X1V. 83.

⁶⁴ Romans. Charles Hodge. Chapter V11. Ver. 7. Page 222. The Banner of Truth Trust.

within the context and by the quotation of the tenth commandment “Thou shalt not covet” Exodus 20: 17 that the word and action of coveting is more literal than the translation of “lust”. And since this quotation from the law is applicable and made applicable by Paul we should review the detail of the commandment within the context of coveting either, ‘houses – married women – male and female servants – transportation – possessions’. Why do I say this? Well because all these covetous sins are mentioned by name in the tenth commandment, therefore if Paul suffered with covetousness then his thorn must have been one of these ‘thorns’. But since it would be poor speculation to attempt to deduce what the sin was from human reasoning, I must repeat once more the words Paul said to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20: 33. “I have coveted no ones silver or gold or apparel”. For it is with Paul’s own words that we can reason this through and know for sure what this dreaded thorn was in hope that we too can be free of or avoid such things. Thus I am convinced that Paul suffered with coveting possessions since he had clearly given up all his possible wealth to serve the Lord Jesus. He clearly tells us that this sin produced in him all manner of evil desire, which is what coveting does. It rips away and eats at the soul. It causes envy and strife, hatred and murder. It is within these texts where Paul demonstrates that the law reveals to a man of his inner sin but it cannot free a man from it. No one knows the pain of sickness until he is sick and no one can cure sickness out until the cure is known. In this context Christ is the cure for transgression of the law and he has the cure and pardon from its curse and judgement. Therefore when Paul communicates this truth he is referring to himself and the cure Christ had given him for his own transgressions. The cure is ‘Grace’ Thus, “My grace is sufficient for you” says the Lord. For it is by grace that I have freed you from the judgement of the sins you no longer desire to fulfil. I have given you a cure and I am that cure.

Paul confirms this in the proceeding verse when he personalises the commandments and argues that the commandments revived his sin when detected and revealed that they were sinful transgressions. Paul would not have known that his covetous desires were a deadly sin until he had indulged in it and then the inward transgression was revealed as sin when the truth of the law came upon him. Paul was familiar with the outward expression of the law and not the inward transgression. Thus when he met with Christ and received the Holy Spirit, all these truths came upon him and caused him much grief and pain and thus he cried out to God to deliver him from his temptation to continue in them. Thus the Lord assured Paul that His grace was far stronger and sufficient than Paul’s struggles with coveting. Thus I believe that this is the thorn spoken of by Paul and for the final piece of evidence let us review and see if Clement

was correct in saying that both Peter and Paul suffered with this sin. Let us look at Peter for a time.

ST PETER AND COVETING

“Peter...said to Jesus, But Lord what about this man?”
Jesus said to him...what is that to you?” John 21: 21

For those who are not familiar with this text permit me to explain the context briefly. Jesus had said to Peter during the days of His resurrection that Peter would be crucified to glorify God (John 21: 18-19) and when Jesus told Peter this he turned and looked at John the apostle and asked Jesus what was going to happen to him. Jesus told Peter to mind his own business and said, “you follow me”. This is one clear example of where Peter struggled intensely with a serious sin, covetous jealousy. And it is made clear to us by the striking and clear words of the Lord directed at Peter, “what is that to you”. If Peter had been speaking this out of concern, why would the Lord reply in such a manner to Peter’s question? It is clear that Peter was saying, ‘what about John...is he going to die a martyr also?’. Not the only thing the New Testament writers refer to when employing the word flesh.

Thus, whether or not Peter did actually suffer such things is a matter for another exploration, of which I may set that aside for another time?

Article Five

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST AND THE ANGELS THAT SINNED

1 Peter 3: 18-20 and 2 Peter 2: 4

Before I begin with this discourse, it would be advisable for you to read the two texts listed above of which both are what some regard as difficult and maybe even secondary texts or texts containing secondary issues?

1. In the first of the two texts being 1 Peter 3: 18-20, the apostle is speaking to his readers regarding their suffering for the gospel and the suffering of Christ, His death and resurrection. Peter also speaks of Jesus preaching to the disobedient “spirits in prison” who appear to have lived on earth during the days of Noah. The period mentioned in the text is believed to have been a time when Christ descended into hell during the 3 days between the death and resurrection of Christ. In verse 21 Peter swiftly moves on from this matter and relates and issue regarding the water that saved Noah and his family, as a type of Christian baptism, “There is also an antitype which now saves us baptism” 1 Peter 3: 21.
2. In the second of the two texts being 2 Peter 2: 4, Peter is speaking of the destruction of false teachers and is reminding his readers that if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them into hell, he will not spare any false teacher. Once again Peter mentions this period when the angels sinned in relation to the time of Noah (2 Peter 2: 5). It is with these things in mind that I am attempting to clarify two very difficult scriptures and hope to cement their interpretation, if not for my readers then for myself.

Before I begin I want to inform any readers that I have researched many various commentaries and views on the two above scriptures, as have many. I am fully aware of the contrasting views and interpretations of these scriptures but I have to say that I have found few of them conclusive, primarily regarding 1 Peter 3: 18-20. Very few commentators make anything known other than some interesting thought provoking comments and connected scriptures. I have reviewed Matthew Henry’s commentary, J.F.B Commentary, Martin Luther, Adam Clarke, John Gill, Matthew Poole, William MacDonald, Barnes, John Wesley and even liberal commentators and none of the published writings satisfy the justice of rightly discerning the true meaning of the text. Most

commentators if not all, are so overpowering in their institutionalised doctrines and understanding that they, knowingly or unknowingly, promote all too eagerly the views they prefer to follow whilst ignoring the facts of scripture. I however do not wish to follow in such footsteps, but rather I honestly seek to promote the truth of the text regardless of who's cage I rattle or who's feet I tread upon. I in my conclusion of this text believe that those whom Christ preached to were in hell and were in fact the fallen angels and not those human men who lived during the time of Noah but the angels who fell during the days of Noah. Some commentators claim that the spirit of Christ preached through Noah and it is such that the text is referring, but the text does not say it was Christ who preached through Noah nor does it imply this either contextually or otherwise. There are also some who claim that the text relates to a second chance after death, but there is no mention of a second chance within the text and no mention of the spirits mentioned being the spirits that are "*now*" in prison as many commentators suggest and translations suggest⁶⁵. Thus, I wish to make this known before I begin so my readers will know where I am coming from with my argument. So then before we look further, let us look for a moment at the fallen angels, who are commonly named "*demons*". Let us openly review and examine if the fallen angels are truly demons or if demons are another creation.

Demonology is a can of worms and no scripture truly determines what demons actually are or relays their origin in clear terms. Therefore it would be wise to look elsewhere in ancient Jewish writings and ancient early Christian texts to see if there are any views presented that may help unfold the Biblical text. None of which will be viewed as canonical or final but mere speculation or Church history. In this search it would be good to review Jewish thought first, since the Old Testament texts are of Jewish origin. Secondly we will review early Christian gentile thought to see if they can offer any insight. So here goes.

On the question of the origin of demons or spirits one view is that demons were a part of the ten objects created on the sixth day (Genesis 1: 24-31). This view is of Jewish origin and claims that demons are the souls that God did not create bodies for on the sixth day because the Sabbath was approaching, therefore such are named, 'disembodied spirits'⁶⁶. There is also the view that demons are the souls of the evil men from the tower of Babel who God judged and turned into spirits, demons (Genesis 11: 1-9). Interestingly enough there could be three sections of

⁶⁵ New American Standard Bible. 1 Peter 3: 19.

⁶⁶ Everyman's Talmud. Abraham Cohen. Chapter IX. Folk-Lore. 1 Demonology. Page 260. Schocken.

people in this text who all say three different things and are recorded as three separate quotes.

1. “Come let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly” (Genesis 11: 3)
2. “Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens” (Genesis 11: 4)
3. “Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the earth” (Genesis 11: 4)

The reason I say that each of these quotes as individual is based upon the text, “Let us” which can be found in verse 3 and two times in verse 4, this quote, “Let us” is only used at the start of a quote. Further proof of this lies in the quote from God Himself, “Come, let Us go down” Genesis 11: 7. Clearly, well almost certainly the first three quotes are quotes from 3 sections of individual groups, tribes or people who were all aiming for different things at the tower of Babel. In turn God scattered them all over the earth and sent confusion as a judgement. It is with this scripture that Jewish thought possibly pinpoints the origin of demons. But the problem is that this would place the origin of demons after the events where the sons of God impregnated beautiful women as told to us in Genesis 6: 1-2. This would mean that the sons of God were not demons but fallen angels and that fallen-angels were not demons but fallen angels. It would mean that the two are separate beings and therefore not related to each other in terms of identity. This begs the question, ‘what are demons and where are they now’? Well, let us look further.

It is a fact that so-called exorcisms are quite popular in today’s Church especially within Evangelical and Pentecostal circles and Catholic circles. The Roman Catholic Church has spent much of its time claiming to have “exorcised the demons” of many seemingly possessed people, but as a Protestant I do not believe the Roman Catholic Church is authentic or Christian, it appears merely Christianised. Clearly it is doctrines such as the worship of idols and the adoration of a female that the Bible describes as demonic. Therefore it could be that it is they themselves who are possessed or inhabited with demons and are instigating the fleeing of demons (exorcisms) away by their own demons. In other words, they are driving out demons by demons. But how can this be? Well, let us look further. Today there are many popular exorcists and ministers of today who all claim to exorcise demons of sickness and demons of addictions, lying, sex, masturbation, pornography, disease, Nicotine and so forth.

They have and do claim there is a demon for just about every sin a man or woman can practice. This thinking could have originated through ancient Judaism where any person who commits a sin is regarded as having a demon, as the Talmud states;

“No person commits a sin unless there enters into him a spirit of madness”⁶⁷.

Some even claim that every sickness is a demon, but this fails in light of scripture where Paul left Timothy with ‘frequent illnesses’ and in no way relates these frequent illnesses as a result of a demon or demons⁶⁸. Therefore it is childish to claim that all sicknesses are demonic but merely a result of fallen man is more consistent. It is also worth noting that Paul relates sinful activity as a result of the flesh, not a demon as many claim⁶⁹. Derek Prince of whom I personally witnessed one of his events claimed that sinful-activities are a result of an inhabiting demon. Prince regularly expounded his sermons by using actual quotes from demons he claimed to had talked with during exorcisms. This may well have been an error? I don't think people should no use the testimony of demons, who are liars, as part foundation for Biblical exposition of the reality of the spirit world. After all there are lying spirits. But are such demons mentioned in scripture? Well, the answer is yes and no. There is a lying spirit in 1 Kings 22: 21-22 that can be related to the spirit of heresy and there are many demons of various sicknesses mentioned in the four gospels, but very little else. Therefore to vacate from fact and wonder through the mythical land of so-called personal revelation of demons could be dangerous. The only demons we know exist are those primarily mentioned by name in the four gospels. But what are these demons mentioned in the gospels and where are they now? Does the Bible say they are loose today and free to enter whomever they wish or were they bound up during the apostolic days when Jesus and the 12 Apostles were on earth? Well, some argue that the fallen angels are the demons mentioned in the gospels while others argue they are not the demons spoken of in the synoptic gospels but are something else? Although such theories are reasonable and explanatory, they leave much to be explained. Questions that ask us, who are the “*angels that sinned*” spoken of by Peter and what are they? Are they fallen angels or demons? Are they in hell or on earth? And if they are in hell as the text states, what are we experiencing today regarding demonic activity? Could the demons have been let loose again as those of the pre-millennial persuasion

⁶⁷ Talmud. Sot. 3a.

⁶⁸ 1 Timothy 5: 23.

⁶⁹ Galatians 5: 19-21.

proclaim? Are the manifestations merely results of illnesses and other issues? Or were they bound up once and for all during the apostolic days leaving the experiences myself and many more have witnessed in this time as questionable? Well I am not willing to embrace private revelations and private interpretations and prophecies but in this, I will embrace reasonable explanations of scripture.

LEGION OR LEGIONS?

The legion of demons who possessed the Gaderene demoniac or demoniac's⁷⁰ as mentioned by Matthew and Luke asked Jesus, "*What have we to do with you, Jesus...Have you come here to torment us before the time?*" Matthew 8: 29. NKJV. These demons who were not unlike Satan who always asked questions, imply two things. 1 The demons knew Jesus previously. There was an appointed time for their judgement. So what was their judgement enforced for, what had they done? Well, in order to find the answer let us look a little further.

Many people think that the angels that sinned were cast out of heaven during the early period of the Old Testament. This however cannot be authentic due to the lack of scripture relating to this matter and the reference to the lying spirit sent out from God in heaven as mentioned in 1 Kings 22: 21-22. If the lying spirit was sent out from heaven it goes to say that the angel was in heaven at the time. Thus as lying is a sin it has to be said that this angel mentioned in Kings, sinned by lying. Therefore the angels spoken of in 2 Peter 2: 4, must be one and the same. But the problem is this, what were these angels doing in heaven and why were they still in heaven and when were they cast out? Well, since there are no references in the Old Testament to Satan and the angels being actually cast out of heaven the answer could be that these angels were cast out of heaven at the birth of Christ or during His incarnation. Christ proclaimed within the context of exorcisms "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*" Luke 10: 18. KJV. Thus we have the distinct testimony of Jesus declaring that He saw Satan fall from heaven during His incarnation. And since Satan himself tested Jesus (Matthew 4: 1-11. Luke 4: 1-13) and demons were certainly in people and on earth during the incarnation it is safe to say that Satan and his angels were on the earth and out of heaven during the ministry of Christ. But what of the great commission and Christ's giving the disciples "authority over all demons" (Luke 9: 1). If

⁷⁰ Matthew gospel says there were 2 men who were possessed at the same event (Matthew 8: 28) while Luke says there was only 1 man who was possessed (Luke 8: 27). The conclusion to this and many more inconsistent complications is much debated and one must draw his or her own conclusions as I have mine.

the apostles carried out this authority and cast out the devils of every kind they came upon, what then happened to them? Surely they could not have been cast out to wonder the earth in search of someone to possess? That would merely make the coming of Christ and the apostolic authority over demons a roundabout of circular events. No, it must be that once an unclean spirit was driven out of a man, it never returned and a complete change occurred in a transformation of the new man in Christ. Thus, when Christ referred to an unclean spirit going out of a man and then seeking to return again and repossess a person (Matthew 12: 43-45). He is not referring to the possessed people that He and the apostles exorcised, but of those whom the Jews were unsuccessfully exorcising and Christ is using this to describe the regenerated man who's old nature has gone and the new has come. But the old nature attempt to come back again, and if it succeeds the man is worse than before because he has rejected the new birth and embraced the old ways. Thus if our study is based upon the correct understanding of scriptural events we should accept that Christ Himself and His authority in the apostles cast the demons or the angels that sinned into chains of darkness. As the scripture reads;

“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness” 2 Peter 2: 4. KJV

So then, when were the angels that sinned cast “*down to hell*” and are they still there? Were the demons who possessed people during the incarnation of Christ the same angels who fell? Well, let us look systematically at the passages in the Old Testament relating to demons or devils in the hope of clarifying where the angels were in Old Testaments times. .

“They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons”. Leviticus 17: 7. NKJV. This scripture offered in response to the devil worshipping Israelites informs us that demons were worshipped from very early on in Old Testament times. The scripture does not however inform us that demons were on earth possessing people as they were during the Messianic and apostolic years.

“They sacrificed to demons, not to God”. Deuteronomy 32: 17. NKJV. Paul quotes this Mosaic text in 1 Corinthians 10: 20 within the context of Gentiles sacrificing meats to pagan gods. Whereas in the Mosaic text, these words were part of a song sung by Moses to the assembly of Israel. Once again the text speaks nothing of demons on earth and in humans, but of demon worship.

“Then he (Jeroboam) appointed for himself priests...for the demons, and calf idols which he had made”. 2 Chronicles 11: 15. Once again we read this scripture relating to the worship of idols directly in line with the Mosaic and Pauline text. We read nothing here of demonic possession or exorcisms.

“They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons”. Psalms 106: 37. The King James renders these scriptures as “devils” but such translation is not quite correct. The Hebrew for demon⁷¹ is not plural but singular meaning demon or devil. Since there is only one devil the Hebrew should be translated demon. This scripture again makes no reference to human possession or earthly demonic residency, but idol worship, being demonic.

These scriptures make things very clear that there are no references in the Old Testament where demons enter people at any given opportunity they may find. But the problem is there is only one reference in the Old Testament to an exorcism taking place and that was at the hand of David when the Holy Spirit was upon him (1 Samuel 16: 23). This spirit was sent from the Lord as a judgement and confirms the fact that the angels who sinned are in fact the demons/fallen angels who enter people and possess those who do not belong to Christ (1 Samuel 16: 14). Although the event of the book of Samuel is the only mention of an exorcism in the Old Testament it does not mean that exorcisms did not take place, or at least attempted exorcisms. But what it does show is that sinning angels can enter people and torment them, as described in the gospels. The gospels are more inclined to proclaim that Christ had the victory and authority over these demons unlike the Jewish and Pagan exorcist's. There were many exorcists in both Jewish and Pagan circles and history verifies this. But clearly such a thing was more widely made more known during the New Testament period of Messianic and apostolic signs. Pagan exorcists had previously attempted to remove demons by means of magic, a charge that the Jews accused the Christians of during the second century,⁷² while many Jewish exorcists believed that demons were already bound and imprisoned by the hand of God. Although the Biblical text is silent of any such events before the messianic period, the ancient writings are not silent. Ancient writings indicate that demons would not submit to lower authorities but would submit to God and they feared Him. Some exorcists manipulated spirits by using the spirits more powerful than themselves and such was the accusation against Christ as

⁷¹ H7700.

⁷² The IVP Bible background commentary. New Testament. Matthew 12: 22-37. Craig S. Keener.
Page 79. IVP.

mentioned in Matthew 12: 24. But how this was done is uncertain but as many texts of the New Testament inform us, such acts were not permanent. Bidding us with the question once again, What happened to the angels that sinned? Well, before we can arrive at the answer we must review the apostle Peter's words in 2 Peter 2: 4 where he clearly announces that the angels who sinned are now in chains being cast into utter darkness. Demonstrating that the demons who were in people were the same angels who entered people during the time of Noah (Genesis 6: 1) and repeated this once again around the century of the incarnation of Christ. But before we continue we must firstly note that Peter uses the Greek word, "tartaroo" being the deepest Abyss of Hades, to describe the place where the angels were bound and cast into. It is described in ancient Jewish literature as a place where the fallen angels were imprisoned, being deep in the abyss. The book of Enoch which may have been quoted in Jude 14 says the following;

"And the Lord said to Michael: Go bind Semjaza and his associates who have united themselves with women so as to have defiled themselves with them...Bind them fast for seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, till the day of their judgement" Enoch X. 11⁷³.

This certain abyss is mentioned by implication in Matthew 8: 28-31, where the demons in the Gaderene demoniac begged Jesus to cast them into the Pigs, but when He did this the Pigs ran violently into the sea, being the abyss (Matthew 8: 32). This same abyss may well be mentioned in Revelation 9: 2, to which 1 Peter 3: 18-20 offers us a valid informant as to a correct understanding of the Pauline text when "*He (Christ) first descended into the lower parts of the earth*" (Ephesians 4: 9). Where He, "*Preached to the spirits in prison*" (1 Peter 3: 19). Not only does Peter confirm the truth of Christ's descent into hell or some other deeper prison but Paul confirms it also, "*Who will ascend into heaven?''' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, "who will descend into the abyss?'''(that is , to bring Christ up from the dead)*". (Romans 10: 6-7) Why would Paul connect an ascension into heaven with a descent into the abyss in connection to the righteousness of Christ? Clearly Paul is testifying to the truth of Christ's decent into the abyss. And it was this time during what was most agreeably between the 3 day period between His death and resurrection that Christ proclaimed victory to the angels

⁷³ The first book of Enoch was known to the Church Fathers but was lost until it was discovered in the nineteenth century. It is believed to have been quoted by Jude in Jude 14. See Systematic Theology. Biblical and Historical. Robert Duncan Culver. Page 166. Mentor.

(Spirits) who were formerly disobedient during the days of Noah (Genesis 6: 1-3. 1 Peter 3: 20). It is in relation to this scripture as written by Peter that the so-called reformed interpretation not only adds to the text of scripture but remains totally unsteady and narrow minded due to the dismissal of sound treatment of the text. Some so-called reformed teaching states that it was the spirit of Christ who preached through Noah to the spirits that are *now* in prison, who await final judgement. But the text does not say this and such views are not only untrue but they add to the actual text of scripture, rather than letting the text speak for itself.

So then let us review and examine the text of 1 Peter 3: 18-20 in relation to the text of 2 Peter and see if can be a connection between the two scriptures? Reads like so;

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just and the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water” 1 Peter 3: 18-20

The scripture related to us in Genesis 6: 1: 4 must be relating to the angels who fell and entered people and took for themselves wives whomever they wished. Though some argue that this text does not involve fallen angels but fallen man, it must fairly pointed out that the oldest interpretation and most sound is that of Philo and the Jewish understanding. Philo regarded the giants mentioned in Genesis 6: 4 as the children of the fallen angels⁷⁴, and this interpretation is ancient and contextual. Even Josephus recorded the ancient interpretation of Genesis 6: 1-4 as relating to fallen angels. Josephus said, “*Many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust*”⁷⁵. There are some both from the past and the present time who deny the descent of Christ into hell, many say there is no such text within the bible to clarify it. Yet the belief of the descent of Christ can be traced from the apostolic age through to the ancient fathers and through to today. The argument against the descent of Christ is based upon theological conjecture and not textual criticism. Many leading theologians both from the past and today deny the descent of Christ. But are they correct? And if they are not,

⁷⁴ Philo. One the giants. (De Gigantibus). The works of Philo. Complete and Unabridged. Pages 152-157. Yonge. Hendrickson Publishers.

⁷⁵ Josephus. The antiquities of the Jews. Book 1. Chapter 3. 1. Translated by William Whiston.

could the text of 2 Peter 2: 4 be connected? Well, let us examine the text. Contrary to many interpreters, the above text cannot involve a preaching to the sinners who are in hell now and were in hell from the time of Noah, for there is no given reason as to why God would do such a thing. If we follow this interpretation we must believe that God gives the dead a second chance of salvation after death and such doctrines are not in the Bible. Once a person is dead they are dead and there is no second chance after death, and I cannot help but know that anyone in hell would accept a way out of hell if they were given a second chance. Therefore God would be unfair to offer a second chance to those who were from the time of Noah and not the entire world. There are many people who may never have heard the true gospel at some point, and do they receive a second chance after death? No. Some have also said that Christ descended into hell to claim back Adam, but this belief originates in written form from the very early apocryphal *gospel of Nicodemus* also called *the acts of Pontius Pilate*. The non-canonical writing said to have been written by Nicodemus claims that Christ descended into hell to claim back Adam and announce victory to the entire world⁷⁶. Thus, if nothing more the book demonstrates that the belief of Christ descent into hell goes back further than most if not all other interpretations of the text. Calvin did not deny the belief of the descent and acknowledges the history of its belief to the fathers but attaches no importance to it, but rather rightly attaches more importance to the death of Christ⁷⁷. Luther is useless regarding the text⁷⁸ and Matthew Henry propagated that the text of Peter is communicating that it was Christ who was preaching through Noah to the spirits of those who are *now* in prison⁷⁹. The problem with such interpretations is that they add words (Such as “*now*” in prison) to the actual text of scripture, and that is forbidden⁸⁰. Such interpreters as Matthew Henry, John Gill, Adam Clarke were wrong in their understanding and their opinions of this matter blinded them from the truth. The text is nothing more than a proclamation of victory to “*the angels that sinned*” during the days of Noah. The text makes this very clear in the use of certain words as *spirits* and *souls* that distinguish the difference between a soul (human) and a spirit (angel). For example the words spirits is used in context of Christ proclaiming to the spirits in prison, Christ “*preached to the spirits in prison*” 3: 19. In verse 20 the saving of the eight people from the time of Noah are referred to as

⁷⁶ *The gospel of Nicodemus*, also called *the Acts of Pontius Pilate*. Chapters 14-20. This book can be traced throughout Church history. Eusebius confirms its existence. See *The Lost books of the Bible*. Page 63. Testament books. New York.

⁷⁷ Institutes of the Christian religion. Book 2. Chapter 16.8-13.

⁷⁸ Martin Luther. *Commentary on 1 Peter 3: 19-20*.

⁷⁹ Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible. 1 Peter 3: verses 18-20.

⁸⁰ Deuteronomy 4: 2. Proverbs 30: 5-6.

“*souls*” not spirits. The Greek translated “*preached*” can mean “*proclaim*”. Thus Peter is distinguishing whom he is referring to when such words are employed. The Greek is employed in the text translated, “*spirits*”, “*spirits in prison*” and can be a reference to “*angels or demons*”. Since the angels who fell were judged by Christ it is the only conclusion of context that the scripture can relate to. The translation would be more clear on its meaning if it read something like this, “*Christ proclaimed the gospel to the angels in prison, who were formerly disobedient during the days of Noah*”. Thus demonstrating by clear and sound interpretation that the text is not a reference to humans who have died but angels who were in prison, a place consumed by utter darkness by 1st century prison standards. The Apostles creed as used in the Church of England and Ireland says, ”*He (Christ) descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead*”. But in the earlier creed as it stood in AD 600 in *Justice Baileys edition of the common book of prayer* makes no mention of this text ⁸¹. Therefore this certain understanding may have been an inventive addition made after AD 600 to oppose certain teaching against the matter? Thus may not be authentic. Sadly many people believe these words to be Apostolic despite the fact that such writings are not referred to by Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian or Eusebius.

This understanding is also affirmed in article 3 of the 39 Articles. Reads like so;

“*As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into hell*” ⁸².

It is my personal opinion that we need all the help we can get in receiving a greater understand the spiritual truths of scripture, and we should willingly review the arguments of the ancients. It is modern interpretations that have brought about corrupt adding to the text of scripture. The NASV has adopted the view promoted by Matthew Henry and corrupted the text of 1 Peter 3: 19, by adding “*now*” in italics to the text, “*In which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison*” (1 Peter 3: 19 NASV). An addition that not only denies the truth of the text but promotes an entirely different interpretation, due to the inserting of “*now*”. Thus it is the so-called reformed thinking that has reacted against the *second chance* theory of the people of the time of

⁸¹ The lost books of the Bible. The Apostles creed. Pages 92- 93. Testament books. New York.

⁸² The Book of Common Prayer. Articles of Religion. 111. London, 1562.

Noah that has caused the reformers to reject the truth and the translators to add to the word.

When we review this text in question we must initially understand the contextual theme of what Peter is saying and whom he is writing to. It is clear throughout the scriptures that Peter was the apostle to the Jews. No one can truly argue against this fact, Peter is writing to Jewish Christians of “*Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*” (1 Peter 1: 1). Therefore as Paul the apostle to the Gentiles was addressing Gentile issues in his letters, Peter the apostle to the Jews is addressing Jewish issues in his letters (Galatians 2: 7-8). Therefore referring to things they already knew but were in need of reminding and reforming. Thus the initial text is speaking concerning the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 3: 18) and the patience of God. Verse 19 communicates that Christ was made alive by the Holy Spirit, “*By whom He went and preached*”. Christ did not descend into this prison in the flesh but in and by the spirit. The same Greek word used to describe the Holy Spirit in verse 18 is the same Greek word used to describe “*the spirits in prison*”. Thus verse 20 furthermore relays to us why the spirits referred to cannot be the unsaved humans, because they “*were disobedient*”. How can the unsaved be disobedient? The answer is that they cannot. The unsaved are rejecters of the gospel and not disobedient. The disobedient ones in the scriptures are only those who belong to God and are not obeying His commandments and decrees. Peter is merely relaying to his readers that it was during the time of Noah that this fall of the angels took place. Coming back once again to the text of Genesis 6 where the “*sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives* (Plural: Not one wife but many) *for themselves of all whom they chose*” Genesis 6: 2. If the sons of God were mere humans and not angels why would it be wrong for them to take wives? Did Abraham, David and many more leading Old Testament characters not take “many wives for themselves?” Of course they did, but the angels are forbidden to marry (See Mark 12: 25. Luke 20: 35-36). Therefore the sons of God must be interpreted as the ancient Jews understood the text as relating to the angels of God who were not permitted to marry. Calvin clearly argued that the title sons of God only relates to heavenly beings⁸³ and Josephus wrote that Noah attempted to persuade these angels mentioned in Genesis as, “the sons of God” to change their actions but they would not for they “*were slaves to their wicked pleasures*”⁸⁴. Noah feared that they would kill him and his family so they departed from that land. Therefore the sons of God who were disobedient and fallen and are now awaiting the final judgement. This I

⁸³ Calvin. Commentary on Psalms 89: 6.

⁸⁴ Josephus. Antiquities of the Jews. Book 1. Chapter 3. 1. Translated by William Whiston. Page 32. Henrickson Publishers.

believe is the definitive understanding of the much debated and difficult texts of 1 Peter 3: 18-20 and 2 Peter 2: 4.

CONCLUSION

It is my opinion that these angels are bound and awaiting judgement. Yes these angels must have been the demons who possessed and destroyed people by inhabiting human bodies during the apostolic age as they had done as described in Genesis 6: 1-2 and the four gospels. They merely did the same thing in the time of Christ as they had done in the time of Noah. Thus when Christ appeared to John in Revelation 1: 18 He said the following, "*I am He who lives and was dead...And I have the keys of Hades (The unseen realm) and of death*". If Christ did not descend "*into the lower parts of the earth*" prior to His ascent into heaven as Paul said He did (Ephesians 4: 9) then what happened during the 3 days between His death and resurrection? It is clear that He proclaimed the accomplishment of salvation to those who had fallen to disarm "*principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them*" (Colossians 2: 15) and to announce that the time had come "*for the judgement to begin*" (1 Peter 4: 17). That the fallen angels would not be let loose until the appointed time and after that the final judgement. Do I believe that the angels have been let loose in 21st century? I do not know. Who am I to say they have or haven't. But what I will say is this, that if you are in Christ, "*neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities...nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" Romans 8: 38-39.